

THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3,121

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MONDAY 21 OCTOBER 1996

WEATHER: Sunshine with showers

(IRASP) 40p

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A nation takes to the streets to protect its children



Clutching white balloons, flowers and ribbons as symbols of purity, Belgians marched in their hundreds of thousands yesterday, united in grief at the murder and abuse of children and their anger at the weak, corrupt state which let it happen. Michael Streeter writes.

For once the country's political divisions were

put to one side as six girl victims - four dead, two rescued alive from their dungeon prison - were remembered. "Today we have no Flemish or Walloons. We are all together," said Brigitte de Stech, 49, a diplomatic official from Brussels, and one of an estimated 325,000 on the demonstration.

But alongside the sadness, the "White March" through Brussels was driven by an overwhelming sense of anger at an establishment seen as culpable. The paedophile affair is just the latest in a series of scandals involving bribery and corruption, mysterious murders and government cover-ups; and now the country has sim-

ply had enough. "Ashamed to be Belgian," one banner said.

The march was the culmination of a week of protests which erupted after the investigating magistrate, Jean-Marc Connerot, was removed for accepting a meal from a group involved in missing children. Photograph: AP

Murdoch in £4bn bid to control FT

Matthew Horsman

Media Editor

Rupert Murdoch is planning to extend his grip on the British media in a deal worth well over £4bn to buy the company that controls the *Financial Times*, Penguin Books and Thames Television.

The audacious bid, to be mounted through his 40-per-cent-owned UK satellite broadcasting company BSkyB, is for control of the Pearson Group. It is being discussed internally at BSkyB and would add dramatically to Murdoch's already stellar collection of British media assets, which include *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun* and *The News of the World*.

The move would signal a revival in Mr Murdoch's interest in Pearson - in which he built up a 20 per cent stake, since sold, in the 80s. It would also set off alarm bells in Parliament and among regulators.

BSkyB's executives, including chief executive Sam Chisholm, are convinced that regulators would be powerless to intervene because their business is majority owned by European-based companies and investors.

But critics of BSkyB expansion point out that it is staffed by senior Murdoch appointees - including Mr Chisholm and Elizabeth Murdoch, Mr Murdoch's 23-year-old daughter.

They add that control of the *Financial Times* would be a step too far for the press baron, whose newspapers already account for more than 30 per cent of national newspaper circulation. There would also be questions about control of a terrestrial television station, Channel 5, in which Pearson has a 24 per cent interest.

The bid preparations, which are at an early stage, are believed to have been mounted in co-operation with a US-based media company. Analysts speculated yesterday that a leading book publisher could be involved.

It is understood that BSkyB would sell Pearson's theme parks and its educational publishing interests if it succeeded in its bid.

BSkyB, which is worth more than £12bn, has proved to be one of Mr Murdoch's biggest successes. It nearly bankrupted him in 1990 but BSkyB survived to become the 14th biggest company in Britain and the near-monopoly supplier of pay-TV programming. It has also expanded aggressively on the continent, taking a leading role in the development of digital satellite television in Germany.

Mr Chisholm is understood to be interested in expanding the company's range of British programming, and is particularly attracted by the production



businesses of Pearson, which make popular programmes such as *The Bill* and *Neighbours*.

Pearson is believed to be discussing a full bid from BSkyB, suggesting that the move is an attempt to "shake out" the television assets. A new management, led by Marjorie Scardino, the first woman to become chief executive of a top 100 British company, was unveiled last week, and is expected to develop its own restructuring plan that could see the sale of its television interests.

Sky's bid, page 18

Churches back Labour

Paul Vallely

The Church of England is to give its backing to a controversial document to be launched by Roman Catholic bishops today in a deliberate attempt to influence the outcome of the general election.

The document, branded as supporting Tony Blair's New Labour party, is an unprecedented foray into British politics for the Catholic Church.

In it, bishops back a statutory minimum wage, demand a more positive attitude to Europe and suggest the country needs a Bill of Rights or other strengthening of civil liberties.

All are proposals which coincide with Labour policy or instincts.

Though it begins by insisting that it is not an attempt to instruct the nation's five million Catholics to vote for one particular party, the document acknowledges its detailed proposals will cause controversy.

"The broad thrust of it is something that will warm the hearts of most Anglicans," said Dr Andrew Purkis, the Archbishop of Canterbury's secretary for public affairs, one of the few outsiders to have seen the

13,000-word document. "It is a wonderful exposition. We'd see ourselves as completely at one with its approach."

It may receive backing from other churches too. One leading Methodist has described Catholic social teaching as "the only show in town".

The document comes amid debate about the role of religion in politics, with the Prime Minister speaking for the first time of his "simple" faith. John Major's remarks follow Tony Blair's identification earlier this year of New Labour with Christianity.

The document constitutes a full-blooded attack on the legacy of Thatcherism. Tory policies, the bishops say, have inevitably widened the gap between the rich and the poor, created a contract culture in which redundant workers are treated as commodities, and have undermined the public service ethos and sense of vocation in social services.

More specifically, the bishops suggest that internal markets have proved inappropriate in health and education, where they penalise the sick and the vulnerable.

But the bishops go further to

the Vatican New Labour when they call for laws to force employers to recognise trade unions in the workplace.

The document has been issued with full authority of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and has the backing of Cardinal Hume. It is being sent to the 3,500 priests in their jurisdictions, strongly urging them to preach on it every week for six weeks in the run-up to the election.

The teaching is not optional; it is an integral part of Catholicism, the bishops say.

The bishops also want study

groups to be set up in every parish to consider the document, and have sent out detailed study packs to facilitate this.

The timing is significant," said Rt Rev David Konstant, the Bishop of Leeds, who is chairman of the conference, conceding that the aim was to influence debate in the run-up to election. "But it is sufficiently distanced [from the voting] to allow people to consider the issues seriously."

The report insists that the Government must concern itself with relative, not just absolute, poverty. The creation of an "under-class" as the by-product of running the economy to benefit the majority is unacceptable.

Unemployment, contrary to Norman Lamont's suggestion, is never a price worth paying. Nor is it morally acceptable to allow wages to fall below a de-

cent minimum as a strategy to fight unemployment.

Other veiled criticisms of the Government are contained in sections which call for the decent treatment of refugees and a demand to reverse cuts in overseas aid.

The document is also a wide-ranging critique of contemporary society, attacking everything from the modern ideology of consumerism to the media which promote it. Broadcasters are criticised for an irresponsible acquiescence in an incremental decline in standards of decency. National newspapers are condemned for a reckless cynicism, and their editors are accused of lacking moral substance; allowing bad journalism to drive out good and leading, rather than following, public taste in a downward spiral.

The Church's own anti-abortion campaigners are unlikely to be pleased with the document, which insists that parliamentary candidates should not be voted for because of their stance on a single issue.

The bid preparations, page 3

Should bishops tell us how to vote? page 14



Major set for collision over 'Maastricht 2'

Andrew Marshall
Anthony Bewins

Maastricht 2, the European Union's new draft treaty, includes a series of policies which would be entirely unacceptable to the Government, raising the prospect of complete deadlock in Europe until after next year's election.

Proposals covering employment, judicial affairs and human rights would all be unacceptable to the Conservatives, as they stand. The treaty is currently under negotiation in the EU's Inter-Governmental Conference, at Brussels today. So irritated are other states at Britain's intransigence that they are also planning ways of moving ahead without Britain if necessary.

There are three broad areas where the proposed treaty will face outright opposition from London. The first is employment. Most European states, alarmed by the rise in joblessness, are intent on putting in a new chapter that would boost employment and co-ordinate policy across Europe. It would create a new EU em-

wielding the British veto to block all progress of a new treaty. The Tories believe they will gain vital electoral support by pursuing a hard line against Brussels, while portraying Labour as poodles of Europe.

Mr Major is now set on a collision course that will run right through to next year's election.

Officials meet in Brussels today to discuss the proposed amendments, and ministers will discuss them next Monday. They will be put into a new draft treaty by the time of the second Dublin summit in December, followed by further detailed negotiations leading to a concluding Treaty summit in Amsterdam, scheduled for June 1997.

But one leading Tory told The Independent last week that Mr Major would also use the forthcoming battle - in defence of British sovereignty - as a means of countering the public perception that he is a "weak leader". Labour sources are sceptical about the impact of that ploy, noting that Mr Major's "tough" stance on ESE ended in retreat.

The EMU debate, page 8

Leading article, page 13

QUICKLY

Newcastle triumph. Newcastle United yesterday went three points clear at the top of the Premiership after a comprehensive 5-0 victory over Manchester United at St James' Park. The England strikeforce of Alan Shearer and Lee Ferdinand were both on target in the rout. Manchester United's heaviest defeat since 1984.

Full report in Sport Section

Therapy shock

A "de-briefing" therapy which requires accident victims to relive the horror of their experience exposes them to greater risk of serious trauma, psychiatrists have found.

Page 5

Cost of fat cats

The salary bill for Britain's privatised boardrooms has risen by £25m since the companies left the public sector.

Page 6

Labour library pledge

Public libraries will be given lottery money to repair decaying buildings and construct new ones if the Labour Party wins power.

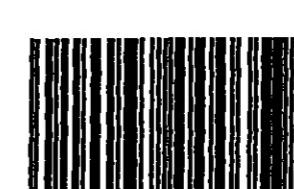
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Democrats' challenge

With President Bill Clinton's lead over his Republican challenger, Bob Dole, seemingly unassailable, the focus of the US election campaign is switching to whether Democrats can achieve a clean sweep by recapturing the House and, more difficult, the Senate.

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Bar code.



Altogether more interesting bar code.



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news

Labour plans boost for libraries

Marianne Macdonald
Media Correspondent

Public libraries will be given lottery money to repair decaying buildings and construct new ones if Labour gains power, in a move which could halve the decline of the library service.

Labour would also impose much tighter limits on the profits which can be pocketed by Camelot if the lottery company wins a second licence. This year its profit was £51.1m after tax, a sum which provoked bitter criticism.

However, the party has ac-

cepted that the lottery could be run by a profit-making body, which increases Camelot's chance of renewing its seven-year contract. Chris Smith, formerly Labour's spokesman for Heritage, had insisted the next lottery operator would be non-profit-making.

The proposals have been drawn up by Labour's lottery review committee. Chaired by Jack Cunningham, the spokesman for Heritage, its members include film-maker David Puttnam and Helena Kennedy QC.

Mark Fisher, Labour's spokesman for the arts, told *The*

Independent: "We will be requiring much tighter contracts to operate the lottery than the present Government's, which we think were ludicrously lax, with profit margins which were far too big." He added: "The existing contract is incompetent and naive."

The lottery report, to be published next month, appears certain to give public libraries the power to apply for capital funding. At present they are largely forbidden from lottery largesse.

They will also be able to apply for revenue funding for information-technology systems, although not for core services such as book buying. "We recognise it is wrong to exclude libraries," Mr Fisher said.

The new streams may be eligible for lottery funding for a fixed five-year term, after which new areas will be chosen.

But if they win popular support the party would also consider "slicing off" the top from other lottery streams which, under present legislation, go equally to arts, sport, charities and heritage.

In an amplification of proposals floated by the Labour leader Tony Blair at Blackpool, Mr Fisher added that giving lottery funds to arts education was part of a policy drive to raise quality.

significant shorts

Test case to challenge race laws

A black man who was found guilty of robbery by an all-white jury was denied a fair trial, human rights judges will be told in Strasbourg today.

The landmark hearing could force changes in British laws on race equality, if the court backs the case brought by David Gregory, who was sentenced to five years in jail in 1990.

He says the judge at his Manchester Crown Court trial ignored complaints of racial prejudice among the jury - breaching his rights to a "fair and impartial hearing", safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights to which Britain is a signatory. The judges will deliver the final verdict later this year.

Plans to replace the traditional policeman's helmet with a "cycling hat" were criticised yesterday, with one police group

claiming officers would not wear the controversial headgear. Police chiefs are considering a number of changes to uniform, with the helmet at the top of the list.

Plans include a curved helmet with a built-in eye shield and radio link. They are only proposals at the moment, said the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The proposals have drawn fiercer criticism from the Metropolitan Police Federation. "It's daft," said a spokesman. The traditional helmet dates from 1863 and is based on a design used by the Prussian Army.

Everest body may be Briton

The body of Joe Tasker, who disappeared 14 years ago while attempting to scale Everest, may have been found just below the summit by members of a Japanese expedition. Mr Tasker, 34, was last seen, along with his partner, Peter Boardman, in May 1982.

The pair were on an expedition led by Chris Bonington, who saw them last at 27,000ft. Yesterday he was still not convinced the mystery surrounding the last days of the men had been solved. "Obviously, it would be lovely if the whole thing could be settled. It would be good for everyone who knew Joe and Pete," he said.

Teenager dies after beating

A

teenager died in hospital yesterday, hours after he was severely beaten by a gang of youths. Anthony Savage, 16, of Nile Path on the Woolwich Common estate, south-east London, was involved in a row with another group of youths while out with friends on Saturday night. Five youths were being questioned by police last night.

Shrimps 'put off' breeding

Shrimps in The Wash are being put off sex - by noisy dredgers which disrupt their romantic moments. Norfolk Labour MEP Clive Needle is urging the EU to afford protection to the breeding grounds. "Catches have slumped from over 800 tonnes to just 50 tonnes."



Not in my back yard: Environmentalists and ex-miners demonstrating against open-cast mining yesterday in the grounds of Mr Heseltine's country house. Photograph: PA

Heseltine protesters dig in

Protesters invaded the country estate of Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine yesterday and dug a hole in his picturesquely front garden.

The 10ft square hole, signposted Heseltine's Bore, was dug by nearly 50 people, some armed with shovels and pickaxes, in the garden at Threndford Hall, Northamptonshire.

The group, including environmentalists, ex-miners and members of the pressure group,

No open-cast mining left Mr Heseltine's land around 11am. Although they assured police officers that the turf would be replaced before they left, it was not. It is not known whether Mr Heseltine witnessed the protest, but it is understood he was at the house for lunch.

Northamptonshire Police

said it was a "peaceful protest" with no arrests and there were no plans to prosecute anyone.

Protest organiser, Steve Parry, said the group wanted to dig a borehole on Mr Heseltine's land after cuts in the deep mining of coal had led to a growth in open-cast mining which was ruining the environment.

A spokeswoman for the Deputy Prime Minister said: "He has absolutely no comment to make."

One miners' supporter, Terry Hutt, 62, from Essex, said: "We just wanted to highlight some of the things Mr Heseltine has done. Lots of people don't like it."

Mr Parry said he believed Mr Heseltine had written to Northamptonshire County Council to "firmly oppose" the plans.

statement that the protesters had turned Mr Heseltine's Northamptonshire retreat "into an open-cast mining site".

Campaigners have lodged a planning application to develop an open-cast mine on the site, and claim the borehole is needed to test water levels before further work.

Mr Parry said he believed Mr Heseltine had written to Northamptonshire County Council to "firmly oppose" the plans.

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Lib Dems snubbed over referendum strategy

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Labour will reject a Liberal Democrat call for three referendums - on Scots and Welsh devolution, and electoral reform - to be staged on a special Democracy Day soon after a Labour government took office.

Senior Liberal Democrat have come up with the Democracy Day plan to overcome expected public resistance to a series of referendum votes being planned by Labour on devolution, electoral reform and, possibly, the single European currency. They believe that by consolidating the devolution and electoral reform votes into one "big bang" event, they might be able to inspire a higher turn-out by selling it as a unique chance to decide on the way democracy works.

No formal proposal has yet been put by the Liberal Democrats to the Labour leader-

ship, but one well placed Labour source said last night that it was not a runner.

If elected, Labour is planning to stage the devolution referendums in Scotland and Wales, within a few months of taking office. The source said there was no question of Labour being ready to stage an early referendum on electoral reform, which would be too controversial to get through the party and Parliament at high speed.

Even Labour sources sympathetic to electoral reform said yesterday that the party leader, Tony Blair, might need to set up an electoral commission to decide the reform options that should be put to the electorate.

Nevertheless, Labour supporters of electoral reform argue that once a Scottish parliament has been created, the House of Lords reformed, and British elections to the European parliament have been switched to proportional representation, the

Commons will be one of the few institutions left working on the first-past-the-post system.

Saturday's Referendum Party conference, an event with a strong English nationalist flavour, was notable for the ignorance of grass roots members about the aims of the party.

Sir James Goldsmith - creator, leader, financial backer, and candidate - told the conference at Brighton that the British people held four principal views about Europe.

"They are: that we should become an integral part of a federal Europe," he said, "or be part of a family of sovereign European nations which would co-operate when we can do things better together than separately; or that we should return to being a member of the European Free Trade Association; or, that we should just get out."

He said the party wanted a referendum which would accommodate such options.

But a majority of the 50 party members questioned by The Independent appeared not to be aware of these options. They said they either wanted to get out of the European Union at once - or expected that to be the outcome.

The review was led by

Community work the best penalty for vice, say police

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Police chiefs are calling for changes in the law to allow convicted prostitutes to do community work instead of being fined or jailed. They also want tougher penalties for kerb-crawlers.

The recommendations, in a review of police policy on prostitution, follow recent calls by several chief constables for the legalisation of brothels. The reassessment of the police's approach also suggests a change in attitude towards child prostitutes, whom the review believes should be treated more as victims than offenders.

Those views are likely to anger some conservative and right-wing groups who are becoming increasingly hostile to the apparent liberalisation of the police's attitude to prostitution.

It is unclear what type of work the prostitutes would be expected to do but it could include working on charitable or community projects. Mr Brain

said that it would need the support of the judiciary and probably a change in the law.

Another of the proposals by the working group, which have received the backing of Acpo's general purpose committee and will be considered by its ruling council this week, is to give officers the power to arrest kerb-crawlers.

At present men caught kerb-crawling can only be summoned to appear at a police station at a later date and police find it extremely difficult to force them off the street. Mr Brain said: "We want an unequivocal power to arrest kerb-crawlers. This would deter men but also place male clients on the same footing as the prostitutes. At the moment the law discriminates against prostitutes, which seems unfair. They should be treated equally."

The Home Office is known to be sympathetic to the police's desire to have powers of arrest for kerb-crawling.

On the question of child prostitutes, the police and other services should be looking at it as "a problem of care and welfare rather than offences and punishment", Mr Brain said. He believes that under-16s who become involved in vice should be considered more as victims.

"It's getting young people out of a cycle of abuse and deprivation. Most get into vice because they have run away from home, have been abused or developed a drug habit. We need to look at developing a range of strategies to help them change their lifestyle." The working group, which has been consulting social services and the Children's Society, is carrying out further research.

Mr Brain does not believe legalising brothels is the correct way forward and has not recommended it. But he said that it was important for the police to examine how they dealt with prostitution.

A ROCKERY



The MALT



news

Evidence against murder suspect revealed



Colin Stagg: Burned newspaper in the street

Michael Streeter

A new chapter in the story of the unsolved murder of Rachel Nickell began yesterday when previously unheard evidence against a man acquitted of killing her was made public.

Friends and family of Colin Stagg were furious that witness statements, including evidence gained by an undercover police woman who befriended him, were published by the *Mail on Sunday*. The tabloid said it was trying to "air" all the available evidence.

Mr Stagg's wife Diane said: "We are totally disgusted and outraged because they are not telling the full story. Nobody wants the killer caught more

than Colin. It would end all this, but we are just ordinary people who can't afford to fight."

Deciding himself to talk to the media, Colin Stagg burnt a copy of the newspaper and threw it in the street in Roehampton, south west London, where he lives. He also hurled eggs at a photographer.

The Old Bailey case against Mr Stagg in September 1994 was dropped before a jury could be sworn in, with the judge Mr Justice Ognall describing the use of the undercover officer as "bait", and "deception of the highest kind".

No jury thus heard statements from what the *Mail on Sunday* called a dozen ordinary citizens, many of whose ac-

counts of 15 July, 1992, when Rachel Nickell was stabbed to death on Wimbledon Common, appear to differ from his.

They include claims that Mr Stagg was close to the murder scene near 10.30am, the time when Ms Nickell is thought to have died as her two-year-old son Alex looked on.

Jane Harriman, the wife of a solicitor, is said to have seen Mr Stagg – whom she later picked out in an identification parade – near the scene at about 10.23am.

One of his neighbours, Susan Gale, says she saw him on the common at 9.25am.

Mr Stagg said he was ill and had cut short his own walk with his dog by 9.15am, when he

watched television, and also told a policeman who guarded the park after the murder that he had been walking his dog between 8.15am and 8.30am.

Another witness, Lillian Avid, is reported as saying she met Mr Stagg that day, when he rushed up and spoke about the murder, mentioning the exact time and place. Disturbed by his knowledge, she asked him: "Are you sure you didn't do it, Colin?" He "grinned" and replied: "Nah".

In his talks with the undercover officer, Stagg is reported to have revealed details of the position of Ms Nickell's body and of her wounds he said he gashed in photographs shown him by police. Police say that he

saw only one, which did not show such detail.

If Mr Stagg continues with his stated plan to sue the Metropolitan Police for malicious prosecution and wrongful arrest, much of this evidence – already presented during the 11-day committal proceedings – will be heard at the High Court.

Yesterday one of his friends, Lee Ashley, said the matter was in the hands of Mr Stagg's solicitor. "Everything that's in the [newspaper] today has been answered," she said.

Earlier, Mrs Stagg, whose car was reported stolen yesterday, said: "There was never any forensic evidence against him and he had tests on his hair, blood and saliva and



Rachel Nickell: Stagg knew details of wounds

Widow looks to bill to reverse sperm ruling

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Diane Blood, the widow fighting for the right to have a baby by her dead husband, yesterday welcomed as "fantastic news" the possibility of a Private Member's Bill which could reverse last week's court ruling against her.

However, a spokesman for the Department of Health denied that the government would support a bill. "We sympathise, but we are not giving support as such. The Government is neutral, and regards a vote on the issue as a free vote," he said.

Joan Lester, the Labour MP, has promised to bring in a bill but, unless the Government promises to make parliamentary time for it, the bill stands no chance of becoming law.

At a news conference yesterday, Mrs Blood, 30, said she would continue her appeal against last week's High Court ruling that she could not use her husband Stephen's sperm, taken as he lay in a coma in March last year, to become pregnant.

The President of the Family Division of the High Court ruled the law banned her from being artificially inseminated since her husband died without giving his written consent.

Mrs Blood said she was still

confident her case could be won on appeal. A fund to help support the costs of the new legal action has brought in more than £20,000 since on Thursday.

She accepted the fact that the decision by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, "not to stand in the way of a Private Member's Bill" would not help her, but claimed it vindicated her taking the case to the Appeal Court.

The basis of her case is that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority had discretionary powers to allow her to go ahead.

"But my particular case is still far from won. My only course of action can be to pursue my appeal in the courts and hope that in the meantime the HFEA will reconsider their decision and allow the sperm to be released," she said.

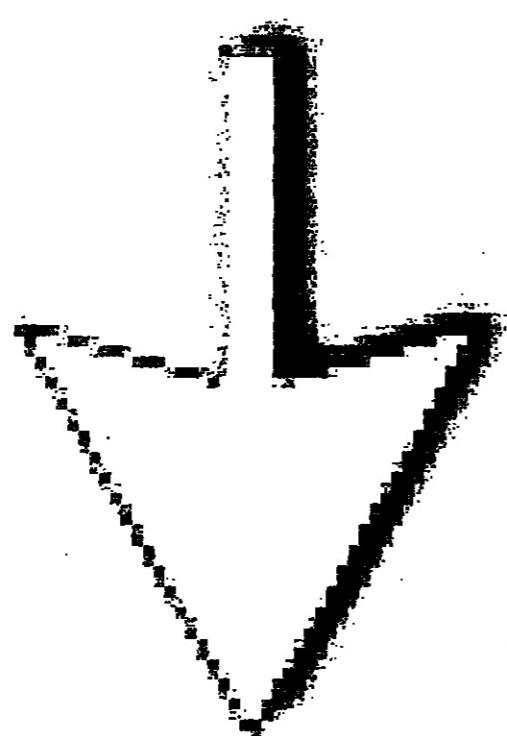
A statement from Mrs Blood's lawyer, Richard Stein, said: "The suggestion of a Private Member's Bill to amend the law must be excellent news for people who may find themselves in Diane's unfortunate situation in the future."

A family friend, Paul Plant, said of the couple: "The two of them were inseparable. He would come to my home and loved playing with my children. He just wanted a child himself."



Simon Wilson, an administrator at St Crispin's Hospital, Northampton, with his wife Susan. He needed stitches in his forehead after an attack at the hospital. Photograph: Keith Dobney

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'Crime of released patient ensured medical treatment'

Glenda Cooper

A dangerous mental patient was released into the community because only by committing a crime could he receive the treatment he needed, it is claimed.

In what is believed to be the first case of its kind, a hospital worker is suing his health authority after he was attacked by the patient, Maurice Badkin, with an iron railing within the hospital grounds.

Simon Wilson, an administrator at St Crispin's Hospital, Northampton, is claiming the hospital had a duty of care to protect its staff. The case re-convenes at Northampton County Court today.

Mr Wilson says he can never forget 14 April 1989. "I was walking down a corridor when I heard breaking glass," he said. "I saw a person I'd never seen before carrying an iron rail-

ing. He walked past me and I said 'what are you doing?' He carried on and said 'Get back', which I did.

"He was 20 feet away when he turned and swung the railing above his head, shouting 'I told you to get back' and stepped closer to me, bringing down the railing with almighty force.

"At the moment of the attack, I thought 'How can you do this to another human being?' and in that instant I decided logically, without emotion, that I would not let him kill me."

Mr Wilson managed to take most of the blow on his forearm, the force being enough to snap the diving watch he was wearing. His forehead needed seven stitches and he suffered severe headaches for weeks afterwards. The major problems, however, were psychological.

The consultant forensic psychiatrist who prepared reports for court said Mr Wilson was

suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and that his quality of life had been "permanently diminished" by the assault.

Mr Wilson is convinced that the essential issue of his case rests on whether the staff responsible for Mr Badkin's care should have granted him unsupervised parole.

It was known that Mr Badkin had a long history of violence and was on medication suitable for someone suffering from schizophrenia. A day before the attack, he had become angry and agitated after an argument with a fellow patient and had expressed delusions.

A month earlier, Mr Badkin's doctors were considering sending him to Rampton, a maximum security hospital. But they believed it would not accept Mr Badkin in his condition. In his medical notes of 24 March 1989, the doctors concluded: "Otherwise, we will have to

wait until he can be charged with some serious offence and be brought before the court."

Dr Peter Wood, the consultant forensic psychiatrist who appeared as an expert witness, said: "It seems that at least part of the thinking of those looking after Mr Badkin was to allow him enough freedom to give him the opportunity to offend seriously so that further methods to control his behaviour could be taken."

But the hospital denied there was any intention to release Mr Badkin in order for him to commit a crime. Dr Albert West, consultant psychiatrist at St Crispin's told Northampton County Court earlier this year that the comment in the medical notes meant "at the end of the line, it is a matter of sadness that this may be the ultimate event. There was no plan or plot on my behalf to allow this to happen."

The Snowdrop anti-handgun campaign launched in the aftermath of the Dunblane massacre yesterday dropped its threat to field a candidate against the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, at the election.

Co-founder Ann Pearson said the need for such a tactic – which could have threatened Mr Forsyth's majority of just 703 – had receded now that Labour was backing a handgun ban.

"I don't see I need to now, because the Labour Party have met our aims as far as a ban on handguns goes," she said. "It would not make sense for me to stand or field candidates in seats that would draw votes from the Labour Party."

Meanwhile Mr Forsyth today signalled a possible drive against film and video violence as the next stage of a campaign against the gun culture.

The power of anti-guns campaigners should now be turned on "the kind of material which is being provided to our children and to adults throughout Britain", he said in an interview in the *Scotland on Sunday* news-

DAILY POEM

Archy and Mehitabel : what next

by Don Marquis

transmigration
of souls
is a great game
if you do not weaken
but every now and then
i get worried
about my future.
i used to be a vete libre poet
before my ego went into
the body of a cockroach
and some times i turn
pale with the
thought that i may
be going further down
yet before i start
to climb back
i might even
be a hat-check boy
in a hotel
archy

Archy the Cockroach first sprang from the pen of Don Marquis (1878-1937) in March 1916 and appeared in a variety of publications into the 1930s. The formula was simple: each night "the boss" (Marquis) left a sheet of paper in his typewriter so that Archy, leaping from key to key, but always unable to perform the double action of a capital shift, could bang out his observations on life, art and the universe. A few years ago, a hoard of lost Archy and Mehitabels were found in a trunk in Brooklyn warehouse. Bloodaxe publishes them this month as *Archyology: the lost tales of archy and mehitabel* at £7.95.

Gun campaigners drop election threat

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Doubts grow over trauma therapy

Ian Burrell

A hospital "debriefing" therapy which requires accident victims to relive the horror of their experience exposes them to greater risk of serious trauma, psychiatrists have found.

Victims who are made to talk about the pain and shock of their accidents are three times more likely to suffer long-term problems than those who receive no counselling.

The findings have been made by a team of psychiatrists based at the Whitchurch hospital in Cardiff who monitored the recoveries of 110 burns victims.

Similar findings were made by an Oxford-based research team working with victims of road accidents.

The researchers say that the

victims not helped by reliving horror of accidents, research shows

widespread belief that debriefing is beneficial may be misplaced.

They argue that it is better to leave victims alone until they start to show symptoms of trauma rather than exacerbate the problem with shock therapy.

In the Cardiff study, half of the victims agreed to undergo an hour of counselling with a therapist within a week of their burns accident.

They were asked to describe the events leading up to the accident, the pain they felt and any nightmares they had experienced after the incident.

The victims, aged between 16 and 63, suffered in a range of incidents from chip-pan fires

to industrial accidents. Some had up to 32 per cent burns.

Those taking part in the study were interviewed after three months and again after 13 months to see if they had suffered any long term psychiatric problems.

The researchers found that 26 per cent of those who had been asked to talk to therapists about how they were burned had gone on to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The symptoms of PTSD include recurring nightmares, a sense of personal isolation, disturbed concentration, irritability and depression.

By comparison, only 9 per cent of those who had not been

given counselling later had PTSD. The results are to be published shortly in a scientific journal.

Dr Jonathan Bisson, the psychiatrist who led the research team, said: "The findings were that the debriefing had not prevented psychological problems at all. In fact, those that received the debriefings fared worse than those who received nothing at all. It is possible that the debriefing actually contributes to the patient getting PTSD," he said.

Burns victims could still benefit from undergoing therapy but it needed to be done as part of a long-term controlled programme. "The best policy ap-

pears to be to wait until the problems occur and then treat them with a prolonged course of therapy."

The Cardiff findings were supported by research carried out with road-accident victims by Dr Richard Mayou and Dr Mike Hobbs at Warford psychiatric hospital, Oxford.

They followed the recoveries of more than 100 traffic accident victims who needed treatment at the John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford. Half the victims were given a debriefing.

Dr Hobbs, a consultant psychotherapist, said: "There's a bandwagon assumption that debriefing is a good thing. The reality is that in our study it did

not reduce or prevent PTSD." He said the most vulnerable people to PTSD were those accident victims who formed the opinion that they were at risk of serious injury, even if they were not.

Others at risk were those who already had psychological problems or a psychiatric illness or those who were suffering from other forms of stress, such as a bereavement, at the time of their accident.

Dr Hobbs said that some victims valued the experience of the debriefing even though it had been shown not to prevent PTSD.

A third study by researchers at St George's hospital, south London, found that debriefing was also ineffective in preventing trauma in assault victims.

Colour chaos polluting the high streets

Michael Streeter

Many of Britain's high streets are a visual mess inflicting "colour pollution" on those who live and work there, according to the author of a new book on colour and the environment.

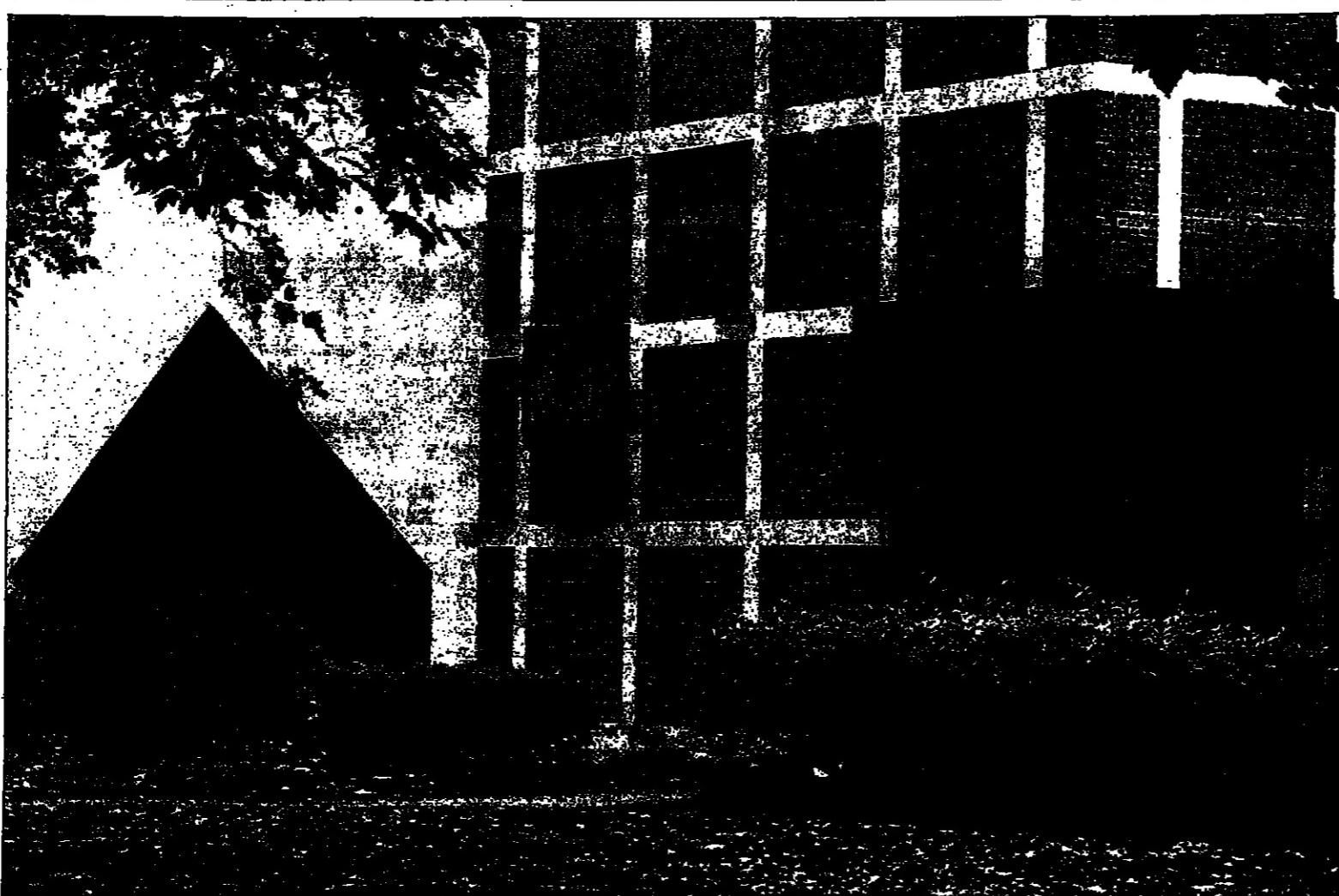
Michael Lancaster, a landscape architect and colour consultant, urges planning authorities to set up colour advisory groups to help set guidelines for the appearance of towns and cities. If do not, he warns, the current decline into visual chaos will prevail. "Most of the high streets in Britain are a mess. Commercial interests have gained the upper hand and this has been without reference to colour."

He says that while the use of various lurid shades all in the same area may have a role – for example in a fairground – it also has its limitations. "At some point you reach saturation. People also need a restful environment."

Mr Lancaster's new book, *Colourscape*, is an attempt to explain the importance of colour to the environment and in particular to architecture. In his introduction he points out that while many people may look at colours, they often fail to absorb their full impact.

This would provide an explanation for the fact that so much of what might be regarded as visual pollution – in the form of industrial dereliction, matted advertisement hoardings and simply litter – often goes unnoticed.

Yesterday, Mr Lancaster put some of the blame on schools which do not teach enough awareness of architecture and the impact of colour in modern environment. He says the role of colour is largely ignored by most architects and architectural schools.



Heroes and villains: The Clore Gallery (above) – the materials and colours of which complement its surroundings – and Hammersmith Bridge (below) which has been painted green, causing an imbalance which ties it too closely to one bank*

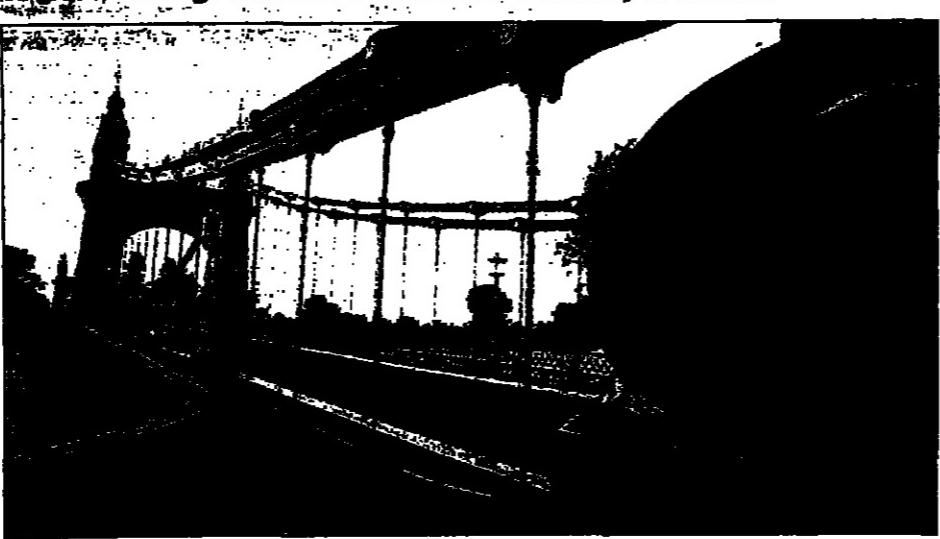
Photographs: Edward Sykes

In the countryside, the use of conservation areas has sometimes helped control colour pollution, but urban areas are largely uncontrolled. "I do not think the British really know how to live in cities yet."

Describing himself as "rather a modernist", Mr Lancaster is a champion of many new buildings, and warns that merely preserving the past ignores the need to be flexible in use of colours in areas change.

However, these need to be co-ordinated – hence the need for his colour advisory groups. A mixture of modernists and historians would help produce guidelines for an area and its streets. These would not be rigidly enforced, but would give planners an "evolving" colour context in which to work.

To illustrate the problem, he cites an example in Putney High Street, south-west London. The



use of four bold colours in four neighbouring shops to emphasise their differences has produced a "garish" effect.

He is also critical of how colour planning is ignored along stretches of the Thames in London – an example being the new painting of Hammersmith Bridge green, which he says "ties" the structure too closely with only one bank, causing an

"imbalance". Mr Lancaster also attacks the indiscriminate use of white in many buildings. "It is very intrusive – but people think it's innocuous," he says.

However, there are some encouraging signs. He describes how hamburger chain McDonald's won an award for its outlet at Richmond, Surrey, by toning down its "strong colour impact" to fit in with the area.

Other buildings worthy of praise, he says, are the West London Waste Transfer Station, at Brentford – with yellows and reds giving a "distinguished" look – the former nuclear research centre now Winfrith Technology Centre in Dorset, parts of Warwick University, and the Clore Gallery – the extension to the Tate, where the architects "have been careful ... to echo the materials and colours of the adjoining buildings".

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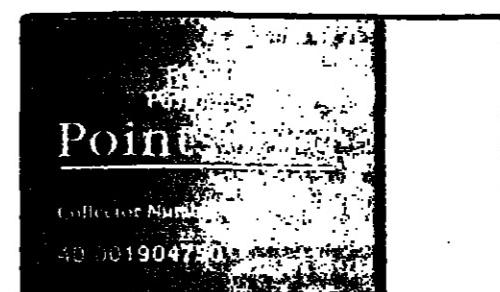
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news

Pay bonanza for privatised utilities' bosses

Chris Blackhurst
Westminster Correspondent

The salary bill for Britain's privatised boardrooms has risen by £25m since the companies left the public sector.

New research reveals the huge pay bonanza enjoyed by the directors of the privatised companies, reopening the row about "fat cat" salaries.

The new study extends far wider than a few chairmen and chief executives and takes in the pay of all utility directors, including non-executives. This shows the wage bills of the utility boards have risen from a total of £5.2m when they were nationalised to £30.5m post-privatisation.

This compares with a rise in average earnings over the last decade, from £184.70 in 1986 to £352 today. While average pay has not even doubled, utility boardroom salary bills have climbed sixfold over, in some cases, a far shorter period.

In all, 215 directors are shar-

ing the £30.5m, giving them average remuneration of around £150,000.

The research shows that the biggest gains are not confined to those companies which have attracted "fat cat" headlines in the last year. Among those heading the charge is Yorkshire Electricity, where the directors' pay packet has soared from £167,000 before privatisation to £1.1m after.

Likewise, Eastern Electricity directors are paid a total of £1.2m more than before their company was privatised.

The figures do not include share options, but they cover salary, taxable benefits, performance bonuses and pension contributions. When options are added in, they would be even higher.

Mr Milburn added: "Consumers are paying the price of abuse in the form of higher bills and poorer service. These latest figures show that voluntary self-regulation agreed after the Greensbury Committee report is simply not working."

In a league of their own are the two giants, British Telecom and British Gas. When they were state-owned their boardrooms each cost less than £500,000. Today, their boards earn millions of pounds. BT di-

rectors have seen their remuneration go up from £489,000 to £3.4m, while at British Gas their pay has increased by a similar proportion, from £495,000 to £3.4m.

The study, which was carried out by Labour, will provide further ammunition for the party's argument for a utility windfall tax. Alan Milburn, a Shadow front bench Treasury spokesman, said: "The Tories have failed to stamp out boardroom excess in the privatised utilities. Abuse in the privatised boardrooms is a modern form of highway robbery, taking from the many to finance the excesses of the few. The windfall gains made by a few fat cats show the utilities can well afford a levy to help the minority."

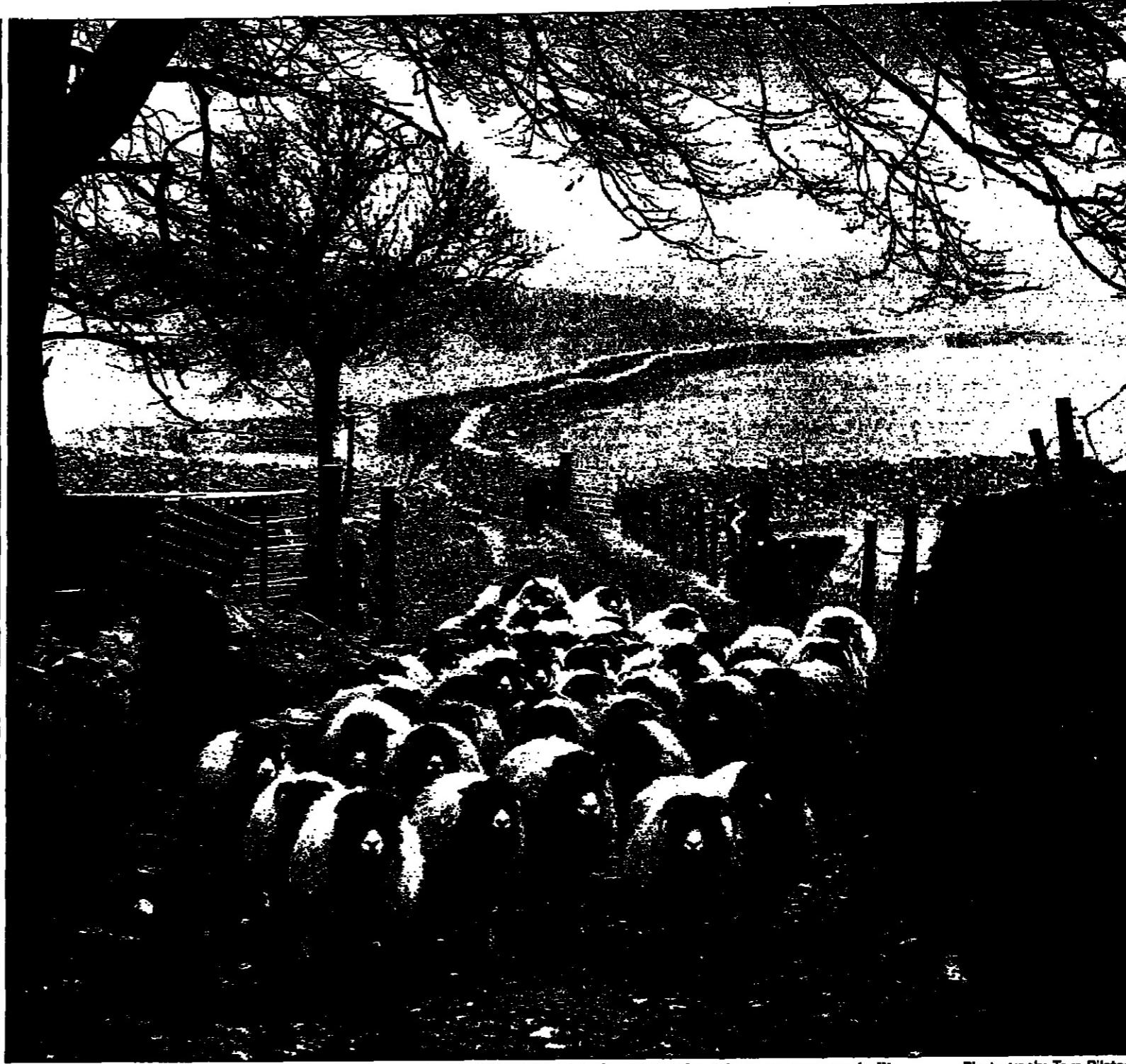
Mr Milburn added: "Consumers are paying the price of abuse in the form of higher bills and poorer service. These latest figures show that voluntary self-regulation agreed after the Greensbury Committee report is simply not working."

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Directors' remuneration in the privatised utilities

	No. directors	Board pre-privatisation	Board 1996
British Telecom	13	£489,000	£3.487,000
British Gas	12	£495,000	£3.133,000
Regional Water Companies:			
Anglian	11	£345,000	£514,000
Severn Trent	10	£297,000	£1.245,900
Southern	9	n/a	£57,000
South West	11	£106,000	£247,000
Thames	9	£103,000	£1.051,000
Wessex	10	£159,000	£592,000
Yorkshire	11	£214,000	£574,000
Total	71	£5,267,000	£6,474,900
Regional Electricity Companies:			
East Midlands	8	£185,000	£1.297,971
Eastern	11	£422,000	£1,620,971
London	10	£228,000	£1.055,000
Midlands	9	£200,000	£982,000
Northem	8	£200,000	£1.336,000
Northeast (United Utilities)	10	£250,000	£1.920,000
South Wales (Hydro)	10	£176,000	£1.105,000
Southern	8	£185,000	£1.162,000
Yorkshire	11	£167,000	£1.113,300
Total	65	£2.313,000	£10,427,271
National Power	14	£846,000	£3,088,897
Powergen	13	n/a	£2,015,901
National Grid	9	n/a	£1,688,000
Utilities Total	215	£5,267,000	£30,594,379

Remuneration includes salary, taxable benefits, performance bonuses & pension contributions. Not options.



The role of stones: Sheep hemmed in by dry stone walls in Yorkshire, one of the counties where many were built

Photograph: Tom Pilston

Battle launched to save stone walls

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A campaign to save what survives of the dry stone walls of England is launched today. Of the 70,000 miles of them which straddle the countryside, half now lie in ruins or have collapsed to the point where they can no longer do their main job of keeping in livestock.

now, that it what will happen."

The campaign is being run by the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Dry Stone Walling Association. "They were built to last by people who have long since gone," Jonathan Dimbleby, the council's president, said.

"It seems inconceivable that tomorrow's landscape will be bereft of dry stone walls but unless we take action

walls, and the commission estimated that only 4 per cent of the total length was in pristine condition.

The walls are in the west and north of England, in hilly and mountainous areas where plenty of rock was available, where the soil is thin and the climate is too harsh for hedges to prosper. North Yorkshire, Cumbria and Cornwall have 32,000 miles

between them – nearly half the nation's total length.

The campaigners want people to gather information about the state of dry stone walls in their area. They are calling on the Government to increase its grants to farmers to maintain and restore their walls and for the grants to be offered over a wider part of the country than at present.

New name blocks rail schedule

Christian Wolmar
Transport Correspondent

Travellers on the East Coast main line railway have been unable to get timetables for the route for the past month because the new, privatised company is changing its name this week.

The timetable for East Coast trains, which run between King's Cross, Peterborough, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow, has not been published by Sea Containers, which took over services in April, because of the impending change of name. Since 29 September, when the new winter timetable and the previous booklet became obsolete, travellers have been unable to get full information.

Several readers have com-

plained to *The Independent* because they have been told that a new company was taking over and they had to print new logos. One of the complainants, Robin McCormick of Edinburgh who has been trying to get the timetable from the city's main station, Waverley, for several weeks, said: "Eventually I had to borrow a full railway timetable from a friend and copy the times like some sort of tenth century monk."

The company is due to relaunch tomorrow as Great North Eastern Railway and a spokesman, Laurie Holland, said yesterday: "We can't legally put out documents using the new name until we are officially that company and therefore we took a decision, based on commercial judgement and common sense, not to issue the full timetable until we had relaunched."

He added that had the period between the old timetable expiring and the relaunch been longer, such as six or eight weeks, "we would have printed the timetable using the old logo and name".

Mrs Holland stressed that the

smaller card timetables for individual routes had been printed with the old name.

He added that there had been a number of complaints: "We knew that there would be some people who would be inconvenienced, but it is a costly booklet and we did not want to waste money."

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news

THE EMU DEBATE

John Lichfield

EMU is coming. The debate about the European single currency has shifted into a new phase. Whether you are for it or against it, whether you are uncertain or just (understandably) confused, the theoretical – will they, won't they? – debate about the European single currency is over.

It is now virtually certain that European economic and monetary union (EMU) will take place, as planned, starting with the permanent fixing of exchange rates in 1999. Whatever Britain ultimately decides

– to join EMU or to hang on to the pound – our relationship with the rest of Europe will change radically in the next six years.

It is likely that at least eight EU countries, possibly more, will merge their national money into a single currency from 2002. By July of that year, the French franc, the Deutschmark, the Dutch guilder, the Belgian and Luxembourg francs, and probably the Irish pound, the Finnish markka and the Austrian schilling, will disappear.

Instead, the Euro will be born, full-grown, circulating from Cork to Helsinki. It will become, instantly,

the second most powerful currency in the world. In time it might become the most powerful, displacing the mighty US dollar.

The European single market would

continue and Britain would still be part of it. But would our trade, and investment from Asia and the US, suffer if we were outside the new European Champions' League? On

the other hand, if we were inside, would a single currency dilute our sovereignty and democracy beyond an acceptable point?

Until the beginning of this year,

there were enormous doubts that EMU could fly. Some lingered until this autumn. In the past few weeks, the global bond markets, the US government, even the British Government, have acknowledged an inescapable fact: a group of EU governments is determined to push ahead with the single currency.

As a consequence, the central questions about EMU have changed.

The old questions were: Is it feasible for European countries to merge their currencies and, in effect, link their economic and fiscal policies? What benefits would it bring?

The questions are addressed by Independent writers on this page.

FOR

Nothing to lose and much to be gained

ECONOMICS

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The case for Britain joining the single currency has two strands, the positive and the negative. Take the positive arguments first.

As long as Emu is Bundesbank-flavoured, economic policy would be better run than it has been by British politicians over the decades. The only freedom that would vanish with the pound is the freedom to devalue against core European currencies. For the pound in our pocket in 1970 is worth only a third as much now as it was when the UK joined the European Community.

The occasions on which exchange rates have successfully brought about a real economic adjustment are very rare, although one of the few – the pound's ejection from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992 – is fresh in our minds. Most devaluations have simply led to higher inflation through higher import prices. Indeed, a weak currency is generally just the reflection of a weak economy.

Having a strong currency has not harmed the German economy, and equally, it is absurd to suggest that if southern Italy had had a separate currency that could have devolved against the northern lire it would have developed a stronger economy. Its declining currency would have reflected its underlying economic and political problems.

Joining a single currency which inherited the Bundesbank's anti-inflationary credibility would also allow interest rates to fall, and by a significant amount. UK rates are about one and a half percentage points higher than German rates.

Similarly, there is no real sovereignty to lose in fiscal policy, and much to gain from sensible harmonisation. Limits are currently set on government budgets by the financial markets, and it has been clear since at least the disastrous French attempt to expand the economy by higher borrowing in 1981 that the

market discipline is powerful.

Even national powers to set particular tax rates are being whittled away by the international marketplace. For example, it would be difficult for any country to switch the burden of taxation from households to companies. Many multinationals would simply transfer business elsewhere. France and Germany are currently finding that even their own companies are increasingly unwilling to pay the social charges on employing people in their own country, and are investing in Britain or Czechoslovakia instead.

Finally, a single currency would reduce the costs of trade and travel within the EU, and would take the single market to its logical conclusion.

The case for not being left out is almost as powerful. Opponents of Emu underestimate the costs of exclusion both from decisions about the future of the single market and from the market itself. For although overt discrimination against British companies would be illegal, there would certainly be informal discrimination. It will become easier and cheaper for three of the UK's four biggest trading partners – Germany, France and the Netherlands – to trade more with each other.

There is already a flavour of British exclusion from important decisions as a result of our lukewarm attitude. The French and Germans are seeking to shape Target, the payments system for Euros, to their own banks' advantage, and to structure their government bond markets after 1999 to the benefit of Frankfurt and Paris. The City of London is very concerned that Britain has already lost its voice in crucial decisions.

The luxuriant flow of inward investment into the UK might also be threatened by hostility to the single currency. Although this country would still offer the advantage of low costs and low regulation, poorer access to the EU market – and the perceived danger of withdrawal altogether from Europe – are already putting off potential investors.



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Unique opportunity to prove commitment

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The creation of a single currency will provide the United Kingdom with a unique opportunity to prove its European credentials – literally, by putting its money where its mouth is.

Staking sterling on a single currency would amount to the biggest show of commitment to the future of European Union since Edward Heath took us into the Common Market back in 1972.

Because of the way in which Europe has split the Conservative Party, forcing John Major to straddle the Tory divide, the perception of European leaders is of a Britain that has to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into any development.

That will remain the case through to the next election, with Mr Major arguing that it would be foolish to give a premature commitment either way, until the terms of the currency creation had been agreed, and it could be seen whether it was in the national interest to join, or not, in the first wave.

But the election campaign it-

self will create its own political

momentum, with the Prime Minister making great show of his determination not to bow, or kow-tow, to Brussels pressures.

The warlike atmosphere to be generated by Number 10 will be used to outflank Labour, portraying it as the Brussels bore. It will undoubtedly inflict great damage on Anglo-EU relations.

If a new government, Conservative or Labour, was then to sign up to the single currency, on the back of an election and a positive referendum, there could be no greater evidence of new-found commitment to the European project.

Sir Edward Heath told *The Independent* last week: "By rejecting the single currency, the Government would be rejecting the European Union as something alien and threatening."

To proceed unchecked

down such a course would risk an inevitable parting of ways be-

tween the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe.

"When considering whether British membership of a single European currency is in the national interest, MPs, as well as the general public, should bear in mind not just the rather complex economic arguments, but also the simple political choice that confronts them: do they think that the United Kingdom should be part of Europe or apart from Europe?"

Sir Edward is not alone.

Writing his book about Europe – *Can Britain Win?* – Michael Heseltine concluded in 1989 that one theme had emerged at every turn, from each chapter.

"The growing speed of change and the gathering concentrations of power in the modern world force the same choice again and again upon the British people. Whether to cling to the sovereignty we know and value, exercising it, even as it shrinks, with all the resourcefulness we can find; or to strengthen that sovereignty by sharing it with others, acknowledging the hazard in order to grasp the greater opportunity."

The Euro – price and practicalities

What will a Euro be worth in terms of pounds?

Of all the single currency arrangements still to be settled, this is one of the most crucial. Many economists have suggested fixing the pound at an exchange rate of Dm2.50, compared to the Dm2.95 rate during sterling's membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism until it was ejected on Black Wednesday just over 4 years ago. That would mean a Euro worth about 75 pence.

What will be the single currency equivalent of pence?

They will be called cents, to the disappointment of those who had been holding out for "pence".

What will the notes and coins look like?

There will be 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euro banknotes; the coins will be 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents and 1 and 2 Euros. Up to 20 per cent of the surface of one face of the bank note will be reserved for national symbols. The notes will also carry the initials of the European Central Bank and the 12 stars of the EU.

If we join, when will we start using them?

No Euro notes and coins will circulate until 2002. They will then circulate alongside national currencies for 6 months, when

the latter would cease to be legal tender. But the banking system will convert to Euros immediately on the start date, 1 January 1999.

Will I be able to use them anywhere in Europe?

Yes, Euro cash will be legal tender in all member countries.

Will it affect my mortgage?

In theory, it could both cut mortgage rates and result in more fixed-rate arrangements. If the single currency is dominated by tough Bundesbank-style monetary policy, UK interest rates could fall to German levels, which could bring the repayment on a mortgage of £50,000 down by about £40 a month.

If the single currency brings more stable policies, British lenders might, like German lenders, offer more fixed-rate mortgages.

How much will it cost to convert to Euros?

There are no reliable estimates because banks and businesses have only just started to think about it. Costs would range from altering vending machines and cash tills to reprinting price lists and rewriting computer software.

According to the British Bankers' Association, the cost to the high street banks would be at least £1.5bn. For the economy as a whole it would add up to billions of pounds.

Anthony Bevins

POLITICS

The very integrity and survival of the United Kingdom as a sovereign state would be at risk if sterling were subsumed in a single currency.

John Redwood and the other Euro-sceptics have repeatedly warned: "A single currency is the biggest and most important step towards a European superstate."

The political critics argue that a single currency would require a single economic policy, and even a unified tax system: stripping Westminster of all but the most mundane power.

The House of Commons would be a strange place without any debates on the progress of the economy, economic growth, unemployment, inflation, mortgage rates and interest rates generally," he said in a booklet last year.

"Yet that is in effect what we are invited to accept if we agree to the single currency, the independent central bank and the main economic policies being determined by our elected officials at the central bank."

With demands by Brussels for greater consolidation of social and employment policy, including the 48-hour-week Working Time Directive, and for greater and greater cooperation in defence and foreign affairs, the houses of Parliament are, he says, threatened with a slow death.

If there were not already a democratic deficit in Europe

POLITICS

not seen in operation in democratic countries before."

The Tory sceptics accept that there could be ways of getting round that, either through the European Parliament, or by having Westminster over-centralised issues of economic policy.

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Drawn into united states of Europe

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Chirac rekindles a very dear friendship

Old grievances are forgotten as France and Syria join hands in a new alliance. Robert Fisk reports

President Chirac positively glowed. He had come to Damascus to "rekindle an old friendship". Syria had provided "endless inspiration" to French culture. The two countries dreamed of "a partnership between equals" and shared "the same obstinate passion" for independence. "Nothing can be truly accomplished in the Middle East without Syria and without your assistance," Mr Chirac told President Assad.

And the Syrian leader, listening to the French President's praise for his "vision and lofty sense of Syria's responsibilities in the region," glowed too. France had re-entered the Middle East centre-stage, to the indignation of America, the anger of Israel, the irritation of the European Union - and the delight of Syria.

Never had the Syrians laid on anything as lavish as their welcome for the man who invoked General de Gaulle's desire for "a solid alliance and an indestructible friendship" with Syria. From the 21-gun salute at the airport, and the thousands of Syrians crying - spontaneously, as they say - "Vive Al-Assad, Vive Chirac", to the rose petals thrown at the French President's limousine, there was no doubt Syria's desire for a new alliance with France.

Gone were the memories of France's brutal colonial occupation during its 1920-48 mandate, forgotten was the attack on downtown Damascus by departing French troops, unmentioned was France's old suspicion that the Syrians may have been involved in the assassi-

nation of their Beirut ambassador back in 1981, a claim the Syrians have always denied.

For France, Jacques Chirac was carving out a new role in the Middle East. For President Assad, the French promise of economic assistance and friendship was a guarantee that Syria need not fear American or Israeli demands for its isolation. No wonder at their joint press conference in Damascus last night that President Assad turned to the French leader and referred to him as "my very dear friend Jacques Chirac". These are not words Mr Assad uses lightly. And no wonder that the Americans, sulking at the exuberance with which Mr Chirac responded to his welcome, could only mutter - courtesy of their anonymous diplomats - that France "did not know what it was doing".

French diplomats travelling with Mr Chirac dutifully echoed the Quai d'Orsay's official line on the visit: the French President was a man of peace who merely wished to show his support for the process of "land for peace" initiated in 1991. But Mr Chirac went far further. Referring to "poorly managed international situations" - an obvious jibe at America's inability to force Israel to keep to the peace accord - he said the peace process was in danger and that "it is time for Europe to co-sponsor this process as well". To President Assad's obvious satisfaction, Mr Chirac stated that "the principle of land for peace remains the basis of any agreement. This holds for the Syrian territory of the Golan Heights and



In memoriam: The French President, Jacques Chirac, lays a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Damascus yesterday. Photograph: AP

part of Syria's 2 billion French franc debt to Paris places him in the forefront of Syria's defenders in the Middle East.

Franco-Syrian relations "have had their ups and downs," he said - the Americans could remember several down - but France stood firmly behind Syria's "strategic option for peace". And Mr Chirac's enthusiasm for a Palestinian state goes further than the EU's support for Palestinian autonomy.

As one French diplomat put it last night, Mr Chirac is not giving to blame Israel publicly for destroying much of the "peace process"; instead, he will address younger Israelis in Haifa and appeal to them to understand the need for an exchange of land for peace. Whether they will accept his contention that the "peace process" is "a hyphen, a link between the two banks of the Mediterranean," remains to be seen. He will be regarded as the friend of a country which the Americans still regard as a "state that supports terrorism".

Back in 1920, the League of Nations gave France a colonial mandate over Syria and France and Mr Chirac's penultimate stop in Beirut will evoke the ghosts of that old colonial rule. Once again, France can claim a special relationship with the francophone states of the Levant. He cannot take the place of the superpower that once supported the Arabs but he can claim that "a certain balance [in the region] makes our participation desirable". All of

I shall say so tomorrow in Israel." But in Israel today, Mr Chirac's words are going to be heard in agony by members of the Israeli government. The speaker of the Knesset has announced he will boycott Mr Chirac's trip to Jerusalem and Haifa because he is not addressing the

Israeli parliament - an odd gesture since the French President was not invited to address the Knesset. He will spend more time with President Weizman than with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but will go on to address the Palestinian assembly in Ramallah (the first foreign leader to do so) and then the Jordanian parliament in Amman.

European Union officials, still smirking at France's initiative - it was sent to preempt Mr Chirac's trip that it sent Irish foreign minister Dick Spring to the Middle East last month - could scarcely object to most of Mr Chirac's remarks. The people of the Middle East and Europe, he said last night, were all part of a "Mediterranean family" and Europe "could not remain indifferent" to the grave events taking place in the region. But Mr Chirac's offer of economic assistance and his decision to forgive

Ortega's hopes hit by ballot fiasco

Phil Davison
Managua

More than 2 million Nicaraguans voted yesterday on whether to return Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega to power or opt for another conservative government to replace that of President Violeta Chamorro.

But failure both to register 180,000 voters on time, almost 5 per cent of the electorate, and to get ballot slips to outlying areas, sowed the seeds of a dispute if the result is close. Even in the capital, Managua, where former United States President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker toured as observers, ballot slips had not arrived at some polling stations hours after voting was supposed to start.

Mr Ortega, 50, a leader of the 1979 revolution and president from 1984-90, is running against a conservative lawyer and cof-

fee farmer, Arnold Aleman, of the Liberal Alliance, a re-launch of the coalition which Mrs Chamorro led to victory in 1990. The result should be known today, with a second round planned next month if no candidate scores 45 per cent.

Mr Aleman, also 50, headed the Sandinista leader by 20 percentage points in the summit, but Mr Ortega narrowed the lead with a slick campaign in which he apologised for past mistakes and said he had switched to free market ideas.

Hovering over the vote was the spectre of renewed civil strife if the result is close, if there are allegations of fraud or if armed groups in the central highlands carry out their threat of renewed guerrilla warfare.

Despite the 1990 disarmament agreement which ended a 10-year war between the army and the US-backed Contra guerrillas, about one-third of the

country remains under the control of guerrilla groups known as los rearmados (the re-armed ones). A few are demobilised Sandinista soldiers but most are former Contra guerrillas. Although they number perhaps only 500 men in total, they control a large swath of territory. At least one group, the Andres Castro United Front (FUAC), threatened to attack troops or police if they entered rebel territory on election day.

Voting appeared peaceful, despite heated campaigning.

Sources in the Supreme Electoral Council, which oversaw the election, said the council came close to postponing the vote by a day when it became clear that the ballot slips had not yet reached many outlying areas. As well as president, voters had to choose national deputies, mayors, local councillors and representatives to the regional Central American parliament.

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PAGEONE
COMMUNICATIONS

international

Crusading champion has no answer to the power of Japan's ancient ties

Richard Lloyd Parry
Tokyo

Naoko Sato is the Chris Evert of Japan, which is just as well given the athletic ordeal she has just put herself through. Twenty years ago, she was the country's most talented tennis player - 17 appearances at Wimbledon were followed by a career as a writer, sports commentator and celebrity. Yesterday, she stood for election to the Japanese Diet as a representative of Shinshinto, the New Frontier Party.

Ms Sato wanted to be elected as a woman of vision and ideas. Her manifesto speaks of the global environment, reforming the bureaucracy and "a new course of nation-building aimed at the 21st century." But the voters of Edogawa Ward, the Tokyo suburb where Ms Sato stood, had other ideas. They nodded when she talked of reform, but what they really wanted to hear about was the new local hospital and the big library which she is proposing. Above all they wanted to see the famous tennis player in person.

And so the 41-year-old Ms Sato embarked on a punishing 12-day marathon - pounding the streets of Edogawa, in a campaign van and on foot, from morning to evening. "I'd like to believe they think about the bigger problems," said Ms Sato last week, hoarse from eight hours on the stump. "But people vote on local issues."

Two election campaigns came to an end in Japan yesterday. The first was the familiar kind, conducted in press conferences and party political broadcasts, focusing on tax reform, welfare spending and security. But the decisive battle was fought elsewhere, in a thousand individual campaigns like Ms Sato's, lost and won for reasons which have less to do with politics than with personal ap-

LDP in the lead

Tokyo — The "new age" of Japanese politics, which dawned amid great fanfare three years ago, appears to be drawing to an premature and apathetic close. In general elections yesterday, the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost power in 1993 after 38 years of unbroken rule, came within a whisker of regaining its majority amid the lowest voter turnout in modern Japanese history, writes Richard Lloyd Parry.

The result was a fitting conclusion to a lifeless campaign which has disappointed steady fading hopes of political change. In the absence of a simple majority the LDP will have to form another coalition government, although with a strengthened power base which puts the party and its leader, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, in a commanding position.

With all but a handful of the results declared, the LDP was projected to win about 243 of the 500 seats in the Lower House of the Diet (parliament), up from 206. Its chief opponent, Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) maintained its

peal, local gain and the almost feudal network of loyalty and obligation that runs like an invisible thread through Japanese life. The profoundly unpolitical nature of Japanese politics becomes clear on a stroll through Tokyo 16. Ms Sato's battle-ground in Edogawa Ward. Voters in the capital are the most sophisticated in the country, but it is difficult to find anyone who votes for purely ideological reasons.

"The parties are all the same," says Hitoshi Makino, 38, a taxi driver who voted for Ms

Sato. "Most of the people round here don't have any special loyalty, but the religious groups send their members to ask their friends to vote for a particular party, and some of those friends ask their friends. If you know someone who belongs to a party, that might be what makes up your mind."

"The truth is that I hold somewhat right-wing ideas," said Seiichi Tsuge, a shy looking 50-year-old who voted for Yoshinobu Shimamura, the candidate of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party. "I'm a

militarist, you see, and I want to use my vote to stop the left-wingers." But personal connections lurk behind even the most ferocious convictions. "Mr Shimamura's cousin is also a friend of mine," he went on.

Behind many of the votes cast yesterday, lies the concept of *giri*, or dutiful obligation, which surrounds every Japanese from birth. You have *giri* to your parents, relations, teachers, friends, your clients and employer, and to the politicians who will give government funding for new bridges, hospitals and libraries.

For years it was common for construction companies which benefit from these handouts to recommend a favoured candidate. Employees were expected to vote accordingly.

Ms Sato has youth, ideas and celebrity but, as a woman and an outsider in a conservative area of Tokyo, the traditional networks of *giri* were closed to her. By ten o'clock last night it was clear she had lost to the 62-year-old Mr Shimamura, a former Education Minister, who represents everything that she is not. His father was elected in 1946 and for most of the 50 years since then, Edogawa has been represented by a Shimamura. Many of his supporters are children of the men who elected his father.

Throughout the country yesterday, voters surrendered to their conservative instincts and drifted back to his party. As the longest established of the main parties, the LDP has an unrivalled local network. Its near victory last night puts it in the strongest position it has enjoyed for three years. "Voters get the politicians they deserve," said an old man called Masayuki Sudo. "But Japanese thinking is still stuck in the 19th century. It makes me angry. Japanese people complain about the state of the country, but they don't know what to do to change it."

Voter turnout was a little under 60 per cent, the lowest since the Second World War. Those voters who turned out opted for a return to the stability of the past. Two out of five, however, could not care either way.

It all started, or so Pillai claims, on a class picnic in 1978 in the Western Ghats rainforest. "When I lit up a stove, a spark fell on a small plant and the green leaves started to burn vigorously," he told *India Today*. "It later dawned on me that I had witnessed something very different."

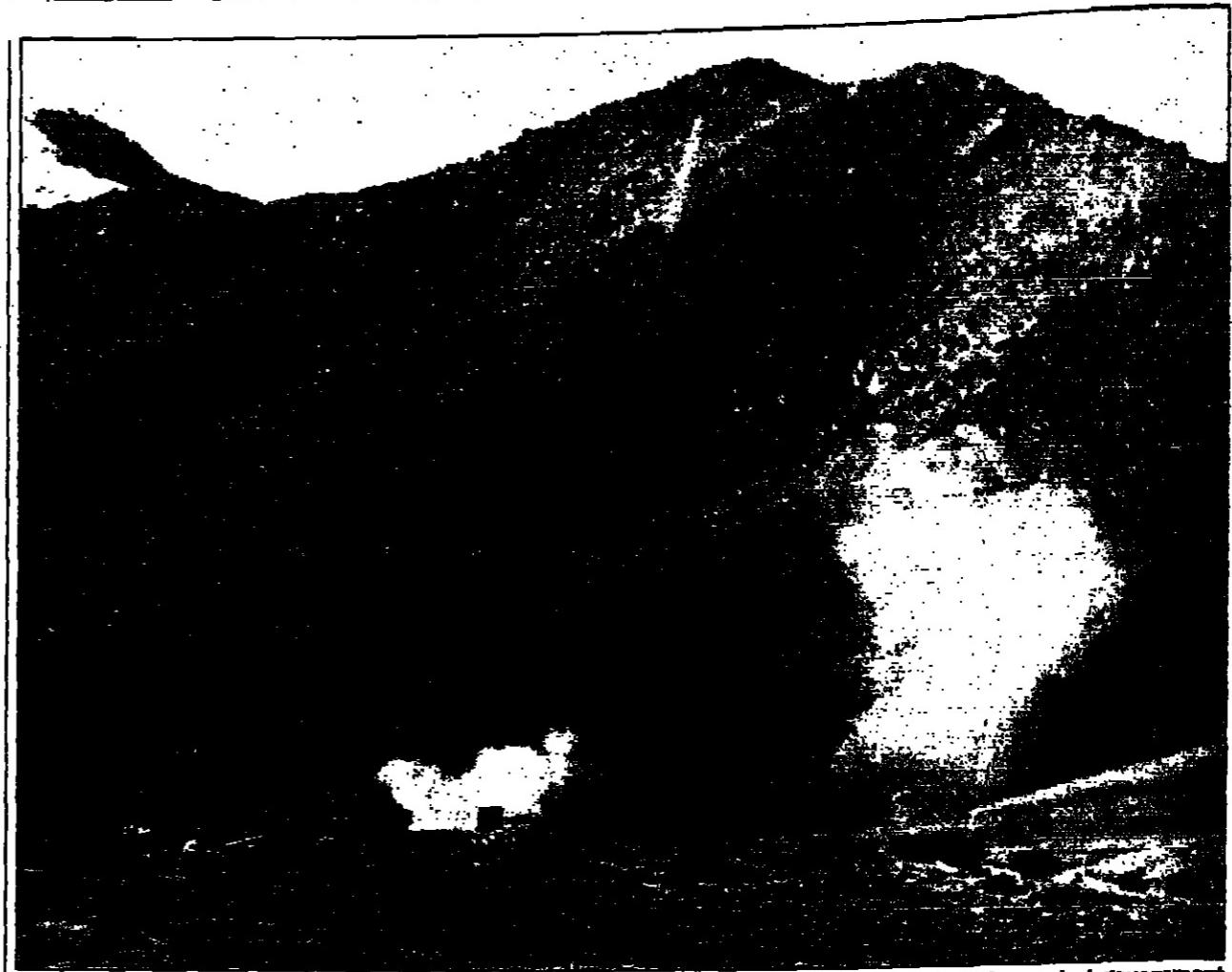
The trouble was finding the plant again. Pillai dropped out

nothing more than paraffin, naphtha, diesel and petrol.

The scientists demanded Pillai undergo a second test, using their instruments. It failed.

Then Pillai insisted on using his own stirring spoon, claiming that its copper and iron composition was vital to the process. The scientists relented, but then one of them noticed the spoon had been hollowed out and filled with real petrol which Pillai had then released into the water. "It was nothing but a crude trick," admitted the DST's Mr Ramamurthy, who had been village inventor's biggest champion.

Yet in Tamil Nadu, Pillai has become a folk hero, who transforms his leaves into petrol before thousands of cheering spectators.



Mountain night: Taliban militia launch rockets, mortars, shells and artillery at positions held by ousted government forces 30km north of Kabul yesterday, taking the war closer to the Afghan capital
Photograph: Reuter

Drivers step on the herbs

Tim McGirk
New Delhi

Some of India's top scientists and politicians were convinced:

Ponmala Ramar Pillai, a school drop-out from a poor Tamil Nadu village, had made the most revolutionary discovery of the century. Using a few herbs, he could transform water

into petrol.

It all started, or so Pillai claims, on a class picnic in 1978 in the Western Ghats rainforest. "When I lit up a stove, a spark fell on a small plant and the green leaves started to burn vigorously," he told *India Today*. "It later dawned on me that I had witnessed something very different."

The trouble was finding the plant again. Pillai dropped out

LOCAL HEROES

of school and spent the next 10 years roaming the Western Ghats jungle, trying to set fire to hundreds of different plants until, at last, he found the combustible one. He set up a simple laboratory in his home at Idaiyankulam and over the years his herbal fuel, which sold for 20 rupees a litre, powered the villagers' scooters, tractors and generators.

In July, he was given a chance to prove his herbal petrol in New Delhi, the capital, at the Department of Science and Technology (DST). The department secretary, V Ramamurthy, was convinced. "If this is true, we are sitting on a goldmine," he exclaimed after seeing Pillai's alchemy.

The excited Indian press compared Pillai to Albert Einstein. The Tamil Nadu state government promised him a patent, financial help, and 20 well-protected acres in which to farm his mysterious plants.

Then it all fizzled out. Last month, he performed the experiment before physicists and chemical engineers at the India Institute of Technology. When Pillai's petrol was sent away for analysis scientists realised something had been added to it. The mixture, which had started as one litre of water, was revealed, after the experiment, to be 400 ml of fuel and 900 ml of water.

Pillai's herbal invention was

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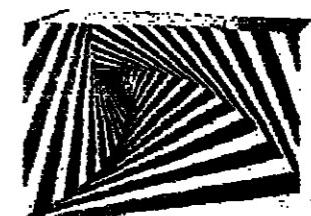
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Forty years on: Hungary's attempt to break the Soviet yoke failed, but memories of an 'ecstatic' revolution remain untamished

The day a nation turned on its masters

Adrian Bridge
Budapest

Ferenc Holl was sitting on the banks of the Danube with his girlfriend when he first saw the crowd making its way across Margaret Bridge.

He could not believe his eyes – or his ears. It was the first demonstration Budapest had seen since the Communist takeover after the Second World War. The protesters, mostly students, were brandishing Hungarian flags from which the hated red star had been cut out. Placards called for the AVO secret police to be disbanded and for Matyas Rakosi, Stalin's Hungarian henchman, to be hurled into the Danube. Above it all rose the chants: "Russians go home!" and, "Now or never!"

Mr Holl, then a 23-year-old locksmith, joined the throng and marched to the headquarters of Hungarian Radio. They hoped the station would broadcast 16 demands, including multi-party elections and the departure of occupying Soviet forces. Instead they met gunfire. Some of the protesters replied in kind: the Hungarian uprising had begun. "As soon as I saw what was happening, I knew I had to join in," Mr Holl said. "After all the years of police terror, the simple act of screaming in protest was wonderfully liberating. We were ecstatic, and the shooting only strengthened our resolve."

For the next two weeks, Mr Holl was one of thousands of

young Hungarians who astonished the world by daring to defy the might of the Soviets with little more than Molotov cocktails and home-made grenades.

He remembers that early euphoria as the Soviet troops stung, agreed to withdraw from Budapest after the reform-minded Communist, Imre Nagy, was reinstated as Hungarian Prime Minister. He remembers the toppling of the giant statue of Stalin, the heady declaration that Hungary would withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and the vain hope that the West would come to Hungary's aid.

Finally, he remembers the sickening despair when the Russian tanks finally rolled back into the city.

On Wednesday, hundreds of veterans of the 1956 street battles will pay their respects to the 3,000 or 4,000 who died in the uprising – part of a series of ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of the outbreak of the revolt on 23 October.

Although this is now the eighth year in which Hungary has been free to commemorate the anniversary, Hungarians are still not sure how to come to terms with it. Under Janos Kadar, the man who replaced – and executed – Imre Nagy, the revolt was labelled a "counter-revolution", master-minded by capitalism and Fascists. Any discussion of the matter was taboo.

In 1989, as Communism collapsed throughout Eastern Europe, the "counter-revolution" of 1956 suddenly became a "revolution" and a "popular struggle for freedom". In June that year, Nagy was given a hero's reburial.

"Just as in 1956 itself, there was a bright moment during the reburial of Nagy when the nation united around the idea of the uprising," Csaba Bekes, of the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, said. "[But] differences emerged over what it had all been about."

To the dismay of many Hungarians, the seven years since 1989 have been marked by bickering between the surviving freedom fighters, who feel they were the driving force of the uprising, and the intellectuals who master-minded it. The political parties have also fought for control over the legacy of the revolt and of Imre Nagy.

While the long-term aims of the uprising were never clearly defined, its suppression led to "goulash Communism" – Kadar's unique blend of Socialism and a limited free market, under which Hungarians could prosper – and forget about taking to the streets.

But the uprising remained a beacon of hope. "Like most revolutions it was irrational," Mr Bekes said. "Logically, there was no way the fighters would ever drive the Russians from Hungary or that Moscow would accept a democracy. For those taking part, the fact they did not stand a chance was not important. In the end people were simply prepared to sacrifice their lives for freedom."



Armed resistance: Russian and Hungarian tanks gather in Budapest in 1956, on the third day of the revolt against Soviet occupation. Photograph: Reuter

Communist rule meant singing silly songs

Imre Karacs
Bonn

Life under Communism often seemed like a tedious progression from one anniversary to another. The calendar swarmed with red-letter days, pageants celebrating Lenin's Great October following on the heels of feasts dedicated to lesser-known revolutions, labour days and assorted liberations.

On these occasions, schoolchildren wearing their little red scarves were herded onto the streets and urged to sing the Soviet anthem and odes to the proletariat. All the world could see our faces lit up with joy, smiling at every stanza. It was indeed hard to keep a straight face whilst singing about "the shining wind blowing on our flag", or the improved versions that were so much more entertaining than the original. Instead of voicing our "yearning for peace" in the Communist youth hymn, for instance, we made a plea on behalf of "our rumbling stomachs".

Our teachers, hiding their amusement behind handkerchiefs, pretended not to hear. No such frivolity was allowed on the anniversary of our own Great October. The 23rd was always sombre. Some people made a futile visit to the cemetery, perhaps lit a candle in the privacy of their living room, but the majority clenched their teeth and got on with the grim task of survival. Its significance could not be gauged from our history books, which devoted one paragraph to the "counter-revolution" of 1956, but we had extra tuition on the subject at home. We knew and they knew that on that day Communism had sustained a mortal wound.

The problem with the "counter-revolution" was that it was fought by workers against the greatest workers' power on Earth. It began with a peaceful demonstration in Budapest in support of Polish reforms. When the unarmed assembly of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia came under fire,

from the secret police, it was the People's Army who fired back. The Communist Party's leader, Janos Kadar, seemed to support the "revolution" and vowed to fight the Soviet tanks with his bare hands. But on being told that the Russians were about to send in 200,000 troops, Kadar fled, to return later in one of the very tanks he had threatened to annihilate.

On the morning of 3 November, short-wave radio sets around the world began to crackle with the news that Budapest was again under attack. The people scoured the skies, looking for Nato paratroopers. But there was no help. The Russians could fire their tanks at will.

What happened in Hungary 40 years ago can be cast as a heroic David-versus-Goliath battle, or as a futile gesture by the world's most suicidal nation. Either way, most of the relatives of the thousands who died seem to think that it was worth it. At least nobody in Europe has to sing silly songs any more.

Only saucy Britons can curry favour in France

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Food from Britain, while "mad cow" disease is in the headlines, was never going to be the commercial success of the decade. But at the opening of one of the world's biggest food fairs – the SIAL – outside the French capital yesterday, the British were putting an admirably brave face on current difficulties and parrying the hackneyed inquiry "Where's the beef?" with paean to the delights of lamb.

It wasn't British lamb, mind you, but English, Welsh, Scottish and even Northern Irish lamb – all displayed under separate flags or logos. Scottish and Irish meat stands tried hard to remind potential customers in their advertising: "quality beef and lamb from Scotland" – that they still produce beef, and are ready to start exporting as soon as the EU ban is lifted, though no one was under any illusion that it might be soon.

"Well, of course, we wanted to bring our beef here, you need to see it and taste it, but the French made clear that they would not let it in," said the representative of a Northern Irish company. "It's regrettable, but the French seem to feel very strongly about this," said another exhibitor.

The representative of a Scottish meat company, a Frenchman based in Edinburgh, wearing a sticker saying "I eat Scotch beef" (in French), insisted that his compatriots made an exception for Scottish beef. "We have customers trying to order Aberdeen Angus all the time, and we have to explain that we can't export it. French beef is really not very good," he added conspiratorially.

Potential buyers – for British meat of any kind – however, seemed few. "It's only hearsay," said one British exporter, but they do say that the beef problem has affected the reputation of British food generally. "Just pour on boiling water, leave for three minutes, and there you are," said the demonstrator. And for anyone with any qualms about selling coq au vin to the French, the British variety is not only easier to prepare, but cosmopolitan in flavour: Chinese, Indian and Mexican.



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essay

What gives bishops the right to tell us how to vote?

The Catholic episcopate did not sit down one day with a blank sheet of paper and a few bright ideas before making their unprecedented foray into British politics. They drew on a coherent philosophy of social teaching which has been 100 years in the making, writes Paul Vallely

It is usually sex which gets the Catholic Church into the headlines. Contraception, abortion, celibacy, misogyny or sexual abuse by priests – such is the stuff of which news is normally made by what appears to be a sex-mad church in a sex-mad world.

But today its bishops venture into a new area of controversy – one which hitherto has been the preserve of the Church of England – politics. The manifesto for a better Britain which they launch today has already been dubbed by one Catholic paper "The Bishops' Guide on How to Vote". The fact will surprise many, yet anyone who knew anything about Catholic Social teaching might have seen it coming.

Not that many people do know anything about it. Though Catholicism's own brand of communitarianism has been steadily and comprehensively developed over the last century, under nine popes, it has been little publicised. "The Church's best kept secret" is how one wag branded it.

Yet, if some will suspect the bishops of England and Wales of being political in the timing of their campaign to make this doctrine better known, they cannot be vulnerable to the charge that their social policy has been made up as they went along, at the whim of the latest fad or ideology, or by arbitrary exercise of their individual consciences.

In a sense, of course, the church has always had views on

social issues. The Old Testament

is full of concern for the poor,

the widow and the stranger,

and the New

extended that to a wider group of the marginalised and oppressed. Throughout history it has been played out in different forms.

The early decades were characterised by a "love communism" as possessions were pooled by the first Christians, who thought that goods were unimportant since the world was just about to end. Later, when the faith was institutionalised under Constantine, and in the millennium of Christendom which followed, it developed a feudal sense of common purpose. For this the great medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas coined the phrase "the common good" – which 800 years on is the name the English and Welsh bishops have given to the document they publish today.

But it has been the battle between capitalism and communism which has forged the coherent philosophy which underpins today's raft of episcopal proposals. The result is a collection of policies which defy neat party-political categorisation, though no doubt many will try to cram them into such a template in the coming days.

Controversy has bedevilled the church's social policy since the publication of the first of its major social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*, by Pope Leo XIII, was published in 1891 as a response to the rise of communism. Faced with the industrial revolution, the exploita-

tion of workers and the greed of

rich men" its conclusion was

mildly – to ask the poor to be

patient and the industrialists to

be more charitable. Yet it was con-

demned at the time as a socialist

document (even though it

specifically attacked socialism)

because it proclaimed the pri-

ority of people over things.

On that premise today's bishops base their unfashionable insistence that labour must take precedence over capital. The document which they want five million Catholic voters to consider before the general election, has hard words to say about the "dumping" of redundant employees in company downsizing operations during the takeovers, closures and mergers which the bishops condemn as a significant cause of modern social injustice.

Long after *Rerum Novarum*, the church remained on the side of the rich. Forty years later, Pope Pius XI acknowledged in *Quadragesimo Anno* that capitalism spread "all the errors of individualistic economic teaching... which lets only those who give least heed to their consciences". But he had no solution in mind. He simply made a plea for social responsibility, and articulated for the first time the principle of subsidiarity – that decisions should be taken at the lowest level consonant with good

government – in an attempt to minimise the concentration of power in the hands of a few. His successor, Pius XII, concluded after the failure of fascism that capitalism was the only way to safeguard freedom and combat both poverty and communism.

Everything changed with the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The revolutionary gathering of popes and bishops – which with its first public document ended the Latin mass which had been the norm for 15 centuries – transformed the church. It began the council a closed, hierarchical institution focused on its sacramental life. It ended as a body which looked optimistically out to the world to read what the council's closing document, *Gaudium et Spes*, in 1965 called the "signs of the times".

Vatican II reduced the church's reliance on its old philosophical style of thinking based on scholastic "natural law" and replaced it with an attempt to allow the Gospel to interact with the "joys and woes, the griefs and anxieties" of the age. Catholics were told to join in secular public life. It was the beginning of the process of breaking the alliance between Roman Catholicism and socially conservative forces. The fruit of that new openness is evident in today's document.

From the next pope, today's document takes the insight that social concerns cannot simply be about the relationship between individuals or classes. They have to encompass nations too. Economic justice is essential to peace, said Paul VI in *Populorum Progressus* in 1967. His vision was more utopian. He condemned unbridled capitalist liberalism, because it paved the way for a particular type of tyranny. He insisted that free trade was, by itself, no longer adequate for regulating trade between the rich and poor worlds. He wanted an international regulatory body, which prompted the *Wall Street Journal* to dismiss his encyclical as "worn-out Marxism" – which is why, perhaps, the English bishops today are less ambitious in considering the Third World, calling more specifically for fewer protectionist tariffs on the goods of poor nations entering the European marketplace.

They appear to have extrapolated from Paul VI in the domestic area, however. The pope had rich and poor nations in mind when he wrote: "When two parties are in very unequal positions, their mutual consent does not alone guarantee a fair contract; the rule of free consent remains subservient to the demands of the natural law."

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Today's document applies that to modern employment practice insisting that the replacement of collective bargaining with individual

individual contracts can be a serious cause of social injustice.

The document's pronouncements on employment draw on two other papal sources. Relying on the principle of the common good, the bishops criticise unions which direct their strikes at the public rather than their employer. But it is to the present pope they chiefly turn in this area. Work is at the centre of all social issues, wrote John Paul II in *Laborum Exercens* in 1981: work not only expresses human dignity, it also increases it.

The Polish pontiff, as might be expected, is keen on Solidarity – not just the communist trade union of that name but the principle it embodies. Solidarity – the recognition that we are responsible for one another – is he has written, the foundation of community. It is not a transient feeling but a "firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good." The UK bishops call on Catholics to join their appropriate trade union. The recent decline in union membership in Britain is not healthy for society, they say. And the refusal by companies to recognise or to negotiate with unions is wrong. Laws may have to be introduced to force employers who refuse to recognise unions or who refuse to conduct collective bargaining.

Catholic Social Teaching is an area which John Paul II has developed more than any other pope, with five encyclicals on the subject. One of his most distinctive contributions is on the notion that sin can be social as well as personal. It can reside in economic and political structures which force individuals into sin. And we may all be complicit in injustices which at first sight do not appear to be our moral responsibility.

"Those who cause or support evil or who exploit it, or those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils, but who fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference, or those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world and also those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required" are all culpable, he wrote in *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* in 1984. "Obstacles to development," he added in *Solidiudo Rei Socialis* in 1987, "have a moral character". These derived, borrowing from the vocabulary of Liberation Theology, as "structures of sin": underdevelopment in the Third World is linked to "super-development" in the "so-called civilisation of consumption and consumerism [in which] one quickly learns that the more one possesses the more one wants."

In the run-up to the British general election the nation's bishops are not reticent about identifying such structural evil. Drawing on the Vatican's worldwide network and diplomatic service, they locate it in unjust trading policies with poor nations, the continuing burden of "unpayable" Third World debt and harsh IMF and World Bank structural adjustment pro-

grammes which cut health and education provision in Africa and Latin America.

The philosophical framework of the common good, with its pillars of solidarity and subsidiarity (a concept borrowed in recent years by politicians throughout Europe) are tempered by another key principle – the Christian "option for the poor" which insists that preference should always be given to the most vulnerable in society.

Such a framework, the bishops insist, places them above party politics. The Common Good is fundamental to Conservative tradition, concern for poverty is at the heart of Labour's heritage, and an emphasis on local democracy is a cherished Liberal Democrat tenet.

And indeed there are some accommodations of more conservative political outlook. In 1991, John Paul II marked the 100th anniversary of the first social encyclical by publishing *Centesimus Annus*, a document which was much more ambiguous in tone. He did warn yet again of "savage capitalism" and the "idolatry of the market". But this time his criticism was balanced with some adverse remarks about the welfare state – apparently under the influence of the right-wing Catholic philosopher Michael Novak – which the Pope said promoted dependency, sapped people of energy, created bureaucracy and vastly increased public spending.

A similar countervailing tendency is evident in today's UK document. It too contains sections on the importance of wealth creation and the need for bad employers not to be subsidised by the taxpayer through the payment of income support to those not in receipt of a wage. These sections are apparently strengthened at the insistence of Cardinal Hume, who took advice on the overall document from his brother-in-law, Lord Hunt, the former Cabinet Secretary.

Nor is there any compromise on morality. The bishops draw on the sentiments of the present pope, whose 1993 encyclical *Laudato Si* warned of the consequences of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism. Democracy is not enough, the bishops insist. It can produce the tyranny of the majority and the reduction of rights of the minority. To work, democracy needs a system of common values to underpin it. Politics today in Britain "badly needs remodelling".

It is a call to which politicians will be unsure how to respond. The sum of all the bishops' parts does not conform to a creature to be spotted in any of the usual British political fieldguides.

Yet they will have to find a way. Today's document from the Catholic bishops marks a new stage in the growing self-confidence of their church. After generations of anti-Catholic prejudice and association with the special pleading of Irish immigrants it has lost its defensiveness. With the Church of England convulsed in its continuing crisis of confidence, we can only expect to hear more from the Catholic bishops.



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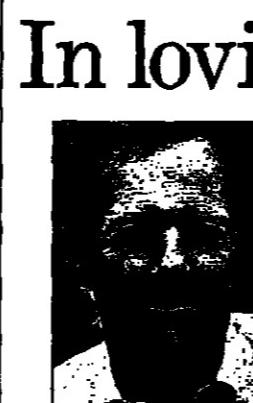
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Miles
Kington

Have you noticed how common memorial services are getting?" said the young man next to me at dinner the other day. "There are all sorts of people getting memorial services these days who never had them before."

"That's true," said his girlfriend, with whom I had just had an amusing conversation about rabies, although she had thought we were talking about babies, which had led to some confusion. "In the old days you had to be very famous or very royal to get a memorial service."

"The vicar gets up at a funeral and puts on his silly voice and says: 'I never knew Alexander very well', and everyone in

the congregation is saying inwardly, 'And if you did, you would have known that everyone called him Sandy'."

"That is because theatre memorial services are basically dollops of gossip served up to look like tributes," said the distinguished-looking elderly man opposite, a bit older than the rest of us.

"But all memorial services are improvements on all funerals. There are at least two things dreadfully wrong with funerals."

"What are they?" said the young woman who preferred to talk about babies rather than rabies. "The first great advantage of a memorial service is that there is no corpse," said the oldest man present. "And the second is that the vicar is edged out of the spotlight. Nothing like a vicar to mess up a funeral. At a funeral, the vicar is often the only person there who never knew the late lamented, and yet he always gets to deliver the funeral speech. Gross mismanagement. I always dread it when the vicar gets up at a funeral and puts on his silly voice and says: 'I never knew Alexander very well', and everyone in

the congregation is saying inwardly, 'I didn't know him either'."

"He trafted away into silence, waiting for someone to prompt him. I obliged."

"Tell us about it."

"He needed no second invitation."

"I had been invited to say a few words at the memorial service of a politician that nobody liked. I alone among the guests did not know him well enough to dislike him. I accepted. I got up at the service and told the company

he among other things had once been of great comfort to me. I said that at a time when my marriage had been undergoing a lot of strain, I had asked this man, the late lamented, for advice, as he had had three marriages shot from under him and presumably had learned something from this."

"The congregation went very still. They were not expecting anything so personal. He paused, I told them, and

then he asked me if I ever went sailing. I said I did not. He said that if you went sailing you soon realised that there was a bond between the captain and the crew which it was impossible to explain and that even when things seemed bad between them, even when they fought and sulked and grumbled, the need to sail the boat properly and safely overcame all petty divisions between captain and crew."

"I told the congregation that I had thought about this for a moment, and had then asked the late lamented if he was telling me to work harder at my marriage. 'Certainly not,' he replied; 'I am recommending you to leave your wife and take up sailing.'

"This got a roar of laughter at the service, and many people told me afterwards that it had cheered everything up at exactly the right moment. However, one man came up to me looking very serious and said that he had been present at the memorial service of a Scottish judge two years previously, at which I had also spoken, and that I had told exactly the same story about the Scottish judge as well."

The distinguished-looking man paused.

"I looked at this man straight in the face and said that it was no doubt true. The reason I said it was no doubt true was that I always delivered the same speech about all late lamented friends, as it saved much time and energy. The man, who was a well-known journalist, said he hoped I would not mind if he put this story in his gossip column... I said I did very much but I did not think I could stop him. I was wrong in this, however, as several minutes later, as we were walking back along The Strand, I managed to tip him under a bus. He did not survive. I was asked to speak at his memorial service, but begged to be excused..."

The distinguished-looking man fell into silence and shortly afterwards went home. We begged our host to tell us whether the story was true.

"Not a word of truth in it," said our host, "but he always tells it at dinner parties and I never tire of hearing it."

obituaries / gazette

Ismond Rosen

Despite the cruel advance of motor neurone disease, Ismond Rosen was this year able to complete the editing and see to press the 3rd edition of what has become a standard text: *Sexual Deviation* (Oxford University Press). He also lived long enough to know that on 20 November – the German Day of Repentance – his crowning achievement, the sculptural triptych *The Holocaust Chapel*, most recently exhibited in St Paul's Cathedral, will find a permanent home in Berlin, the city where the Holocaust was conceived. It is improbable that there is any other Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatry who is also a distinguished Fellow of the Society of Portrait Sculptors.

Ismond Rosen was born in 1924 in Johannesburg to artistic Jewish parents who had emigrated to South Africa from Tsarist Russia. Family life was warm and supportive. He helped his parents run a hotel, and there learnt a basic tolerance towards every human condition. "I was expected to show a sense of responsibility and tact to the guests, who included artists and players from touring companies, and drunks who were potentially violent. All very good practice for dealing later with difficult psychiatric patients."

He was only six when he began to copy Africans, making clay figures, and was encouraged at high school by the eminent South African artist Walter Battis. He was academically outstanding, and his parents insisted that Latin must come before art. At 17 he began training at Wits Medical School. Hard work was learnt early and never unlearnt: "... cash up in the bar around midnight, write up the books, wake

Chris Acland

In the late 1980s, before grunge and Britpop, shoegazing (so called because performers were doing literally that, staring at their feet while playing) was the buzz word on the UK indie scene and Lush, whose drummer Chris Acland committed suicide on 17 October, were prime exponents of that much misunderstood musical genre, along with Ride, Slowdive and My Bloody Valentine. After the early success of the *Spooky* album (a top ten entry in 1992), Lush floundered somewhat, but came back with a vengeance and three hit singles earlier this year.

The band was formed in 1988 by Miki Berenyi (vocals/guitar) and Emma Anderson (guitar/vocals), two disaffected students who'd met at Queen's College (a girls' school) in London and edited the Alphabet Soup fanzine. At the beginning, the group also comprised drummer Chris Acland (who was at the time Berenyi's boyfriend), bassist Steve Rippon and vocalist Meriel Barham who soon departed to form the Pale Saints.

Despite early shambolic live performances at the Falcon in Camden, Lush's early ethereal sound brought them to the attention of 4AD supremo Ivo Watts-Russell. The alternative label of Beggar's Banquet, 4AD had already achieved a modicum of success with the Cocteau Twins and This Mortal Coil and Lush seemed to fit the mysterious style, distant image and art-house sound of the imprint.

In October 1989, their first release, a mini-album entitled *Scar* appeared, and the incen-

tuous British music press went into overdrive and praised it to the heavens.

However, in a rather perverse move, the four-piece decided to follow it with a series of EPs (the "Mad Love" and "Black Spring" four-trackers) and singles ("Sweetness And Light" and "For Love") and, even though these were gathered on the *Gala* compilation, *Spooky*, its debut album proper, didn't appear until January 1992. Produced by Cocteau Twin Robin Guthrie, the album found its niche among the student constituency and reached number seven on the listings.

By then, Phil King, a former *New Musical Express* journalist, had replaced Steve Rippon on bass. With this injection of new blood, Lush toured the world and found themselves on the Lollapalooza tour, along with Pearl Jam, Ministry, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ice Cube and Soundgarden. However, while the American acts all clicked on their homeground, the British band – the opening act – struggled and were early casualties of an increasingly insular fanbase. Following appearances in Japan and Australia, Lush started work on their next record.

But the four-piece lost momentum once more and didn't release their second album, *Split*, till June 1994. They tried to make up for the delay by putting out two singles ("Hypocrate" and "Desire Lines") on the same day and painted a London cab with a variation on the sleeve of *Split* but to no avail. In the music press, the knives were out.

Lush had started to live up to their name too much and became the rockabilly number one party people around London. Miki Berenyi claimed that that reputation grew because journalists always noticed her distinctive red hair in a crowd, but the excuse rang hollow. Hacks were willing them on to do the decent thing and break up. Howard Gough, their early manager, lost faith and was replaced by Peter Feistead (who also looks after the Boo Radleys).

Looking back on that difficult period in a *Select* magazine interview which appeared six months ago, Chris Acland admitted he "went through a phase of feeling a bit useless. I wasn't really doing anything with my life, I was waiting for someone else to do it for me, because me and Phil don't write the songs. And I didn't want to carry on living like a student. When you start heading towards 30, you want to get out of that, because it's so easy to drift. It's quite an undignified existence, being in a band. After a while, you begin to feel a bit of a fake. And if it ties you to London, really I'd like to make loads of cash and buy a country house."

Things didn't look good for the band. Sleeper, Echobelly, Elastica and Skunk Anansie were the boy/girl acts in the news and on the charts but, in a fit of pique, Lush soon rejoined them and proved how influential they'd been.

Earlier this year, the band came back stronger than ever with three hit singles ("Single Girl", "Ladykillers" and "500") and *Lovely* disappeared from the listings.

Acland had started to write material for the band ("Sweetie", the B-side of "Single Girl", and "Piledriver", a track included on "500") and was the inspiration behind a track called "Ciao", originally penned by Miki Berenyi because the drummer wanted to sing. But Acland was joking and Lush recorded the song with Jarvis Cocker from Pulp, a band of fellow indie stragglers who'd finally hit the big time. Radio stations got a promo version of the track but, wary of bandwagon-jumping accusations, Lush opted for "500" as a single instead and *Lovely* disappeared from the charts.

Although originally from the Lake District, Acland was a keen Tottenham Hotspur fan and, along with members of Moose and the Cocteau Twins, became the Lillies, to record a humorous flexi-disc entitled "And David Seaman Will Be Very Disappointed About That" which was stuck on the front of *The Spur* (a football fanzine) following the team's victory over North London rivals Arsenal in the 1991 FA Cup semi-finals.

But under the joky exterior, darker forces were at work. Following a tiring American tour, Acland fell once more into depression and was considering quitting the band. He went to visit his parents in Cumbria and down but seemed to be heading towards new horizons.

The track "When I Die", written by Emma Anderson about the death of her overbearing father forms a sad epitaph to Chris Acland's career, which had seen many ups and downs but seemed to be heading towards new horizons.

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business

THE INDEPENDENT • Tuesday 21 October 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

OFT to call for referral of Bass bid for Tetley

John Shepherd
Business News Editor

The Office of Fair Trading is to recommend that the Government refers the proposed takeover of Carlsberg-Tetley by Bass to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Senior officials at the OFT are applying the finishing touches to a report that will call for a full MMC investigation, and will probably pass their recommendation to the Department of Trade and Industry of its views in the next fortnight.

The £200m merger would create a business with 38 per cent of the beer market and more than 4,000 pubs, making it by far the country's biggest brewer ahead of Scottish & Newcastle.

Representatives from Allied Domecq, half owner of Carlsberg-Tetley, are understood to have been called to a meeting with officials at the OFT in the last week, at which they were told privately that the bid should be referred. A similar meeting to the same effect has apparently been held with Bass representatives.

Moreover, a source said yesterday that the OFT might even bring forward the meeting of the Mergers Panel - which comprises other Whitehall departments - at which John Bridgeman, Director of Fair Trading, will finally make up his mind and subsequently inform the DTI about the OFT's views.

The OFT's insistence on the deal being referred will surprise City analysts, many of whom firmly believe that the takeover will be nodded through with a few minor undertakings - such as the sale of some pubs, or the putting out to tender of some beer supply contracts.

Shares in Bass have recovered strongly over the last few weeks following the inevitable fallout that occurred when the bid was announced.

Some observers believe that the OFT is still smarting from the DTI's clearance of last year's takeover of Courage that propelled Scottish & Newcastle Breweries into pole position in UK brewing with a 30 per cent-plus share of the market. Additionally, the OFT is

understood to be keen to take stock of events in the industry since the implementation of the Beer Orders in 1992 and particularly the potential consequences of Bass's dominant market share were it allowed to buy Carlsberg-Tetley.

One leading analyst said yesterday: "Consolidation was the logical conclusion of the Beer Orders, and it makes significant sense for the OFT to refer the biggest deal that there will be."

Not only is the OFT concerned about the competitive issues but it is, unusually, questioning the commercial logic of the Bass deal to buy Carlsberg-Tetley. This marks a radical change by the OFT in reviewing mergers. Told about this shift, one industry observer said yesterday: "From now on we will never know where we are with the competition authorities."

The OFT's investigation since the bid was formally announced in August has been unusually widespread - canvassing the views of every party from the big brewers to small beer clubs in towns. "Everyone that is conceivably involved in the industry has been consulted. If the OFT thinks that a deal is OK, then there will be minimal consultation," a source said.

While Mr Bridgeman has, according to sources, yet to see the full report from senior OFT officials about the Bass deal, he is more than aware that the DTI, both under the successive control of Michael Heseltine and Ian Lang, has ridden roughshod over the competition authority's recommendations on numerous occasions in recent years.

Even if the DTI does not refer the bid, then the OFT can still push its case by calling for an investigation into the whole brewing and pub industry.

This has happened with the travel industry twice since the OFT pitched in, but was denied an investigation into the planned takeover by Airports for Owners Abroad a couple of years ago. Recent reports suggest that the OFT has secured agreement from four operators - mainly over the way they operate their travel agencies - that will allow them to escape an MMC reference.

Pearson itself discounted the likelihood of a hostile approach, but analysts said BSkyB could easily afford Pearson, which might cost between £5bn and

£6bn to win. The prime target of BSkyB's affections was believed to be the television subsidiary, run by Greg Dyke, which takes in Thames Television, Grundy Worldwide and SelectTV, the makers of *Birds of a Feather*. The rest of Pearson's sprawling holdings would be sold off.

BSkyB had the distribution, but needs more original programming, Anthony de Larriaga, analyst at PaineWebber, was considering a bid helped push the shares sharply higher in morning trading, hitting 745p at one point, a new high. By the end of the day, the price had moderated to 730p, still 33.5p ahead, as the market interpreted comments made by Sam Chisholm, chief executive, as indicating a bid was not imminent.

Several analysts suggested yesterday that BSkyB might just be "shaking the cage", to see if a new management team at Pearson might be persuaded to sell the television subsidiary.

Last week, Pearson announced the appointment of Marjorie Scardino, chief executive of the Economist Group, as its new group chief executive, replacing Frank Barlow, who is retiring. Ms Scardino has said she has "no strategic prejudices", and that there would be no sacred cows. Some observers have already reached the conclusion that she could be willing to sanction the sale of the television business and Madame Tussauds, the attractions and theme park subsidiary, to concentrate on the publishing and electronic media assets, including Penguin, the Financial Times, Addison Wesley Longman, the educational publishing imprints and Mindscape, the company's CD-Rom and game cartridge manufacturer.

It is understood that several options for the company had already been considered by consultants and advisers prior to last week's announcement of Pearson's management succession. Analysts said yesterday it was inevitable Pearson would move to restructure its businesses, whether or not a takeover bid materialised. They suggested Pearson had still not streamlined its management structure and its array of assets, despite a radical overhaul of managerial responsibilities earlier this year. Meanwhile, it emerged last night that Dennis Stevenson, the newly appointed deputy chairman of Pearson, had been the choice of at least three executive directors for the position of chairman, a role he assumes in April. His supporters were David Bell, John Makinson, finance director, and Greg Dyke. It is also understood that the original shortlist for chief executive included Mr Makinson and at least two outsiders - Bob Phillips, the deputy director-general of the BBC and Archie Norman, chairman of Asda.

City bankers and businessmen got a taste yesterday of what the journey to work will be like once the £2.5bn extension of the Jubilee Line to Canary Wharf in London's Docklands is completed in 1998. To mark the construction of the tunnels that will link docklands to the City, the heads of six companies based at Canary Wharf were invited on a 2km walk under the Thames. Among those making the trip on foot were Sir David Walker, chairman of Morgan Stanley, Sir Peter Middleton, chairman of E2W which moves in next year, David Vaughan, vice-president of Credit Suisse First Boston, David Alexander, legal director of Texaco and Colette Bowe, chief executive of the Personal Investment Authority. Also in attendance were Hugh Doherty, London Underground's project director, and Michael Pickard, chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation. The Jubilee Line extension will run from Green Park to Canning Town and will carry an estimated 80 million passengers a year - by train, not on foot.

Photo: Philip Meech

Docklands firms see light at the end of the tunnel as £2.5bn Jubilee Line extension takes shape



Pearson soars on bid rumours

Mathew Horsman
Media Editor

Shares in Pearson, the media conglomerate, soared yesterday on speculation that it had once again become a takeover target and that it was contemplating breaking itself up to see off potential predators.

Reports that BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster owned 40 per cent by Rupert Murdoch, was considering a bid helped push the shares sharply higher in morning trading, hitting 745p at one point, a new high. By the end of the day, the price had moderated to 730p, still 33.5p ahead, as the market interpreted comments made by Sam Chisholm, chief executive, as indicating a bid was not imminent.

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Photo: Philip Meech

Homes for sale at eight-year low as owners wait

Nic Cicutti
and Diane Coyle

ing it hard for them to sell. Also, some owners are unwilling to sell because they are waiting for free shares from building societies' demutualisation plans.

ARICS spokesman said: "The scarcity is forcing up prices but it also means reasonably priced, desirable properties are being sold extremely quickly, giving the false impression that a 'boom' is imminent. One of the main reasons for homeowners' reluctance to put their properties on the market is their sometimes over-optimistic expectation of future price rises."

Consumers questioned for the EC poll this month were glummer about prospects for their own personal finances but more optimistic about the economy in general. Respondents expect unemployment to fall further.

Figures due out tomorrow and Friday will be scrutinised for signs that the improving "feel-good" factor is being reflected in official economic statistics. While City analysts expect tomorrow's retail sales figures to show a drop during September following a bumper August, they expect them to show continuing strong year-on-year growth.

The estimate of third-quarter GDP due on Friday could turn out to be important for next week's monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England.

The Governor has made it clear he thinks the economy's strong growth means there is a significant risk of missing the inflation target.

Labour pledge to monitor costs of PFI

Michael Harrison

A Labour government would introduce new controls to ensure that the Private Finance Initiative does not create huge spending commitments for future years that cannot be met.

Alistair Darling, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, also pledged that Labour would make sure that the private sector was paid only for risk that was genuinely transferred out of the public sector when awarding projects.

Speaking yesterday at the annual conference of the Private Finance Panel, Mr Darling warned that the public would lose faith in the PFI if it came to be seen as an ingenious way of circumventing spending con-



Revolutionary: Kenneth Clarke defended the PFI

trols at the taxpayers' expense. By getting the private sector to put up capital expenditure for road, rail and health projects and then paying it back through a stream of revenue payments in future years, the Government was creating formidable commitments for future generations which it was failing to monitor in a systematic way.

"The Government must put in place such controls immediately. If they don't we will," he said. "We cannot allow this country to sign up for commitments that it cannot reasonably afford. There have to be proper controls in place."

Mr Darling also said that while Labour strongly supported the PFI, there would be much greater emphasis on making

UK set for £700m Telekom bonanza

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British investors could be allocated more than £700m worth of shares in Europe's largest privatisation, the sell-off of Germany's state telephone company, Deutsche Telekom.

Details of the offer disclosed yesterday show UK investors will be awarded 8-12 per cent of the 500 million shares available. The British allocation is likely to be second only in scale to that of the USA and Canada combined.

The vast majority of the shares destined for UK investors will go to institutions. Sources suggested the interest by retail investors in Britain, or "Sids", would probably be limited. The final allocation depends on the size of bids received during the institutional bookbuilding process which begins today.

However, in Germany the

privatisation has attracted huge interest of the kind seen during the first British privatisations in the mid-Eighties and looks set to be heavily oversubscribed. When the deadline for applications from private investors expired on 11 October, 3 million individuals had registered. Half the small investors applying had not held shares before.

Organisers also revealed that after vetting 3.5 million applications received they discovered that 500,000 had been made twice. UK accountants Price Waterhouse have been engaged to check that no small investors have profited more than once. Individuals in Germany will get a small discount of DM0.5 (20p) a share up to a maximum of 300 shares.

Deutsche said the indicative price range for the shares was DM2.5-DM 3.0 a share, valuing the 20 per cent of the company being sold in the first phase at more than DM12.5bn.

The RICS survey said the number of homes for sale in England and Wales has fallen to an eight-year low, prompting fears of a property famine as sellers wait for further price increases before placing their houses on the market.

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors said the refusal of homeowners to put properties up for sale created a vicious circle because it meant they in turn could not find something suitable to buy.

The RICS report yesterday came as a separate survey said consumer confidence remained close to its highest level since 1988, due to optimism about general economic prospects. This news was taken well in the City, and the FTSE 100 share index reached a fresh record, closing 20 points up at 4,073.

Although the level of confidence has not changed during the month following a big jump in September, it remains high by past standards, according to the regular poll carried out for the European Commission by researchers GfK.

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DAVID MILES

'Poorer countries with lots of labour should – if they just differ in the relative amounts of people to machines – have much higher capital productivities than richer countries; but they do not.'

Sleaze damages the economy as well as politics

Most people who have read Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* remember the catch: if you are mad, then that is grounds for being declared unfit for flying dangerous bombing raids, but claiming insanity to avoid flying is the act of a sane man.

But there is a short scene in the novel which seems to me to contain an idea which is of far greater importance than the eponymous "catch". A central character has been discovered committing a selfish act which could endanger others. He is confronted with this and asked the question much loved by headmasters when faced with naughty schoolboys: "What if everyone did that?" After some thought the answer comes: "Then I'd be a fool not to."

Economists will instantly recognise a Nash equilibrium here (after the mathematical economist John Nash) – a situation where, given everyone else's behaviour, each person is acting in a way which is individually rational. What the *Catch-22* example suggests is that such equilibria may not be very pleasant places to get trapped.

Nasty equilibria are often ones where cheating or breaking conventions or stepping outside the law becomes individually advantageous, though collectively very costly. Laws and social conventions can be crucial in preventing societies being trapped in nasty equilibria where standards of living can be low. It is useful that there is a convention, increasingly backed up by sanctions from stewards, that people do not stand on their seats at football matches to get a better view. Although doing so would certainly be rational if other people around you did, it is collectively self-defeating.

science

A bitter pill with a fatal attraction

Painkiller turned killer? John Emsley unravels the mystery of paracetamol

Speaking at the British Medical Association annual clinical meeting earlier this month, Professor Sir David Carter, director of the Liver Transplant Centre at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, called for a ban on Britain's most popular painkiller, blaming it for a significant number of patients who need transplants.

Britons buy 4 billion paracetamol tablets a year for aching heads, muscles and joints. Paracetamol is sold under many trade names such as Hedex, Panadol and Calpol (the syrup form suitable for children), and it is also added to other tablets and liniments such as Anadin Extra, Solpadeine and Night Nurse.

Every week more than 500 people go to hospital having taken an overdose of this painkiller, on average five of them die. While most who receive medical help have taken an overdose deliberately, a few have exceeded the safe level by taking too many paracetamol-based cold remedies. Treatment consists of the antidote, N-acetylcysteine, and if this is given within 10 hours of taking an overdose they will usually come to no harm. However, for a few the antidote comes too late and, although they appear to recover, recovery is brief, because paracetamol has destroyed their liver.

Paracetamol is the generic name for N-(4-hydroxyphenyl) acetamide, which used to be called para-acetaminophenol. It is a bitter-tasting, white solid, which is not very soluble in water, and melts at 170 degrees C. The molecule consists of a benzene ring with hydroxy (OH) and acetamide (NHCOCH_3) groups attached. It was first prepared in the 19th century from 4-nitrophenol, which was made from the phenol produced by Victorian gasworks. Paracetamol was originally used to make dyes and as a developer in photography. Then, in about 1950, it began to be sold as a safer alternative to aspirin, which causes stomach bleeding and ulcers in some who take it.

Paracetamol, like aspirin, acts primarily on the nervous system by blocking the enzymes needed to make prostaglandins, whose production is stimulated when the body is damaged or invaded by viruses or bacteria. It is the over-production of prostaglandins which leads to the discomforts of inflammation, pain and high temperatures. People used to use paracetamol unknowingly in the treatment of fevers 100 years ago, when the chemical acetanilide (generic name antifebrin) was given to hospital patients. This brought their temperatures down because the body's own metabolism converts it to paracetamol – although this was not realised at the time.

Paracetamol lasts in the body for about six hours, and the average person can take 24 paracetamol tablets (12 grams), at the rate of two every six

hours for three days, and come to no harm. But if they take them in one go, they could die. In his book *Introduction to Toxicology* (2nd edition, Taylor & Francis) Professor John Timbrell of the London School of Pharmacy explains the paracetamol mystery: "Although paracetamol's effects are beneficial, our body still treats the molecule as something to be excreted, and it does this by converting it to other molecules that are more soluble in water and filtered out by our kidneys. There are three enzymes that help remove it, and it is the one which comes into play if we take too much that causes the problem."

Molecule of the Month

The body's preferred way of removing paracetamol is with an enzyme which adds a sulphate group to the molecule. Alternatively, it can use another enzyme to attack the unwanted chemical with glucuronic acid, a derivative of glucose, which has the same effect of making it more soluble. If the amount of paracetamol is low, as it is with the recommended dosage, these enzymes cope quite easily. But if we take too much then a third enzyme, a monooxygenase, becomes more important.

This oxidises paracetamol to a highly reactive molecule, N-acetyl-4-benzoylquinone imine, which can attack the protein of the liver, but it is prevented from doing so by the natural antioxidant, glutathione. It is when this eventually becomes depleted that the liver is at risk, but this can be prevented by giving the patient the antidote N-acetylcysteine, which increases the liver's glutathione levels.

There is also another way of preventing damage due to overdosing: adding methionine to paracetamol tablets. This essential amino acid boosts the amount of glutathione in the liver. Panadol or Paracetamol tablets offer this added protection, even though they are slightly more expensive at about £2 a pack of 24, compared with £1.50 for advertised products, and less than £1 for own-brand varieties. Medical authorities are divided on whether such tablets are effective in preventing liver damage. Those who take paracetamol for long-term treatment should not be prescribed them because of the dangers associated with excess intake of methionine. "Packs of these brands should carry warnings against too-frequent use," says Dr Geoffrey Brandon, of the Paracetamol Information Centre, points out that a high intake of methionine has been linked to heart disease and strokes.

The author is science writer in residence at Imperial College, London.



Master of molecules: Sir Harry Kroto, with a model of buckminsterfullerene

Photograph: John Connor/Press Associates (Brighton)

We've got the chemistry right

Sussex University isn't in the Ivy League, but then who cares when it can boast three Nobels? By Hugh Aldersey-Williams

Early this month Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, floated the idea of an "Ivy League" of English universities, to include Oxford and Cambridge, London and Durham.

On the same day came news of Britain's latest Nobel prize, awarded to Sir Harry Kroto, for the discovery (with two American scientists) of buckminsterfullerene, a molecular third form of the element carbon in addition to the long-known diamond and graphite.

And which of those august institutions provides its ideal surroundings? Well, none actually. Sir Harry is a chemist at the University of Sussex.

Sussex ranks in the top five grades of the universities' research funding pecking order. But there are moves to split the top division. Dr David Walton, Sir Harry's long-time co-worker at Sussex, fears that the resulting superleague would be like the "Ivy League", and that small universities would suffer in the scrabble for funding. "When the kitty is tiny anyway, it only accentuates the differences, encouraging the belief that size alone is important," he says.

Sir Harry is the third chemistry Nobel laureate associated with Sussex. Archer Martin won the prize in 1952 for his invention of techniques in chromatography, for separating the chemical constituents of mixtures using solvents.

In 1975, John Cornforth won the Nobel prize for his study of the orientation of biologically important molecules such as enzymes and steroids as they undergo chemical reactions. He, too, gravitated to Sussex.

The Royal Society makes a deliberate effort to counteract the Ivy League effect, often awarding research professorships to those not working in London, Oxford or Cambridge. Dr Walton has worked on ambitious projects

for computers and dictionaries for use with the languages and scripts of Sri Lanka, an interest reflecting a fondness for the country and its people developed during a sabbatical there helping to establish a university.

There has also been a willingness to rethink the science disciplines. "From the outset, chemistry wasn't regarded as 'organic' and 'inorganic' and 'physical,'" says Dr Walton.

"Courses had names like 'Mechanistic principles' or 'Synthesis'." Chemistry itself was called "Molecular sciences".

But most important were the personalities. Professor Martin and Professor Cornforth went to Sussex because of the attraction of working with others whom they admired. Sir Harry has come back from America at the

invitation of Professor John Murrell, now the dean of chemistry, physics and environmental sciences. "We were the first of the new universities, and the first to say we were going to do scientific research from the start in a big way," he says.

Even the students took part, with a course entitled "Chemistry by Thesis": after just two terms of course work, they could pursue a two-year research project leading to examination on a written thesis. Topics were chosen to incorporate an interdisciplinary element. Students were supervised by researchers from the respective disciplines.

This, in turn, provided a means for the scientists to initiate new research. So began Sir Harry's collaboration with Dr Walton, who had pioneered methods of synthesising complex acetylene molecules. Sir Harry was interested in these molecules because they represented an ideal system for spectroscopic study, a straight rod of pure carbon atoms, uncomplicated by angles and branches and foreign atoms. This collaboration led to Sir Harry's most spectacular work before his Nobel prize – the alternate identification in interstellar space and synthesis in the laboratory of polycetylenes.

Without such barriers, the benefits flow both ways. Professor Murrell speaks the receiver after a phone call from the head of European studies, who has called to congratulate him on Sir Harry's Nobel. "The university as a whole feels better for it," he says with a grin.

The writer's book, 'The Most Beautiful Molecule', describing the Nobel prize-winning discovery of buckminsterfullerene is published by Aurum, £18.99.

the dire consequences for our future scientific capability."

"The issue nationally is whether there is an Ivy League of universities or of departments," Professor Murrell concludes. "The only case for a university basis is if you believe there is a lot of cross-disciplinary collaboration." In general, there is not. And if there is, it is perhaps most likely at small universities and at those, such as Sussex, that have tried to demolish barriers between disciplines.

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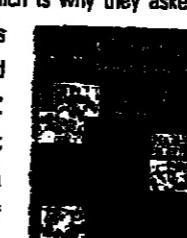
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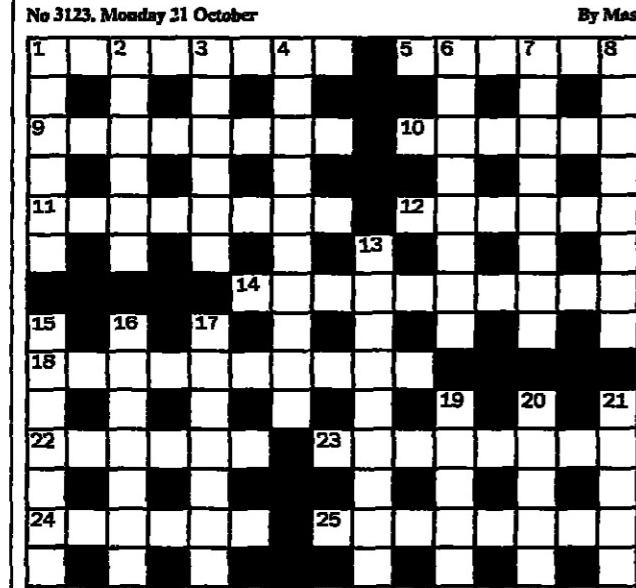
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ACROSS

- 1. Girl has bearing showing haughtiness (8)
- 5. Flat! Onset of slopes provides relief (6)
- 9. Green showing in the dark (8)
- 10. An arm of espionage? (6)
- 11. English coin (gold) found in coach (8)
- 12. One by one, audible, shut up (6)
- 14. Light reduced in entertainment site (10)
- 18. Trace lines made to converge (10)
- 22. Prompt judgment voiced (6)
- 23. Decide to settle (8)
- 24. Slackening strong fabric, wife's liberated (6)
- 25. Tattoo, dead odd on master (8)
- 26. Country track rejected by guide (6)

DOWN

- 1. Press has line in garbage (6)
- 2. During drink object to ridicule (4,2)
- 3. Tar on highway, all over (6)
- 4. Disposed to cheer party in Cabinet? (10)
- 6. Wet sleeping into short pointed shoes (8)
- 7. Like wood with glue on, is sticky (8)
- 8. Plug into tranquil piece of music (8)
- 13. Star actor I groomed - the 'Duke' (10)
- 15. During stress I had a bit of bad luck (8)
- 16. Establishment providing sandwich courses (5,5)
- 17. Excuse before getting tight, we hear (8)
- 19. Southern river, very good for fish (6)
- 20. Agency supplying boyfriend round old city (6)
- 21. Pound causing trouble with the European (6)

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